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THE
MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

BY

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PREFACE

EARLY in 1914, while still in Hampstead, I was invited by the Authorities of the Assembly's College, Belfast, to lecture on the Christian Ministry. The outbreak of the War delayed the delivery of the lectures for a year. Even then it was too early, to forecast the effect of that great upheaval either on Christian thought or on our Church life, and I have not thought it wise, in revising proofs, to introduce references to a question the answer to which is still involved in doubt.

The Lectures are now published according to agreement and as they were delivered, in the hope that they may win from that wider public to which they are now addressed the same kindly reception accorded them by the original audience, to whom I can never be too grateful for the diligence and appreciation with which they listened to me.

U.F. MANSE, ANCRUM,
ROXBURGH, N.B.

September, 1919.

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THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

PART I.—MAINLY HISTORICAL

CHAPTER I

THE PROPHETIC MINISTRY

THIRTY years ago, it fell to my lot to deliver the closing address of a session to the Theological Society of the New College, Edinburgh. I based my remarks on St. Paul's words to the Corinthian Church: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." I learned then how hard it is to define the terms, to grasp the ideas, to enter into the experience of the great apostle; I have been learning ever since. It is therefore with diffidence and yet with eagerness that I accept your invitation and am here to address you on a theme which, however old, is ever new, the Ministry of Reconciliation. Let me premise that my outlook is in no sense academic. I am not a Professor of Church History or Systematic Theology. If I intrude on the former, it shall only be as a passing

guest, to borrow here and there an illustration. If I touch on the latter (at my peril, as I well know), it shall be only so far as the practice of the Ministry, into which I desire to initiate you, requires a previous knowledge of its underlying principles. The fifteen lectures I am to deliver I purpose to divide into three groups—the first mainly historical, the second mainly personal, the third mainly doctrinal; but all through, my interest and aim is definitely practical. There are objections to such a method, involving, as it does, frequent repetition. But if, by dint of repetition, I can impress on your minds a few central truths touching the nature and the methods of the Christian Ministry, I shall be satisfied.

Nothing in Old Testament theology is more interesting than the gradual development of Prophecy. It was there, of course, from the first. Innate in every man is a desire to press behind the scenes, to feel after the secret of his own life, to reach out toward God. And the desire was seldom without satisfaction. From court or cottage men went forth to whom the Eternal had revealed Himself, thus fitting them to be His mouth-piece to others. At first Prophecy laboured under serious limitations. It was sporadic, intermittent, non-ethical. Only very slowly did it clear itself of these limitations, casting its swaddling-bands aside, and becoming conscious of the infinite possibilities it enshrined. Now this development was connected with what were called Prophetic Schools. Their foundation, by whomsoever planned, was a step of the utmost importance. They were the Colleges, the Universities of their age. Mostly they were planted in some quiet spot like Bethel

or Ramah, where freedom, quiet, and the healing influences of nature could be secured, yet not too far from the abodes of men whose life and destiny they were meant to shape.

Gradually a threefold advance was effected :—

(a) Prophecy had been sporadic. Here and there, like Deborah under the palm tree or Amos herding sheep, some one had heard the call of God and obeyed. But he stood alone, and could accomplish little. Great is the power of numbers. A single smouldering coal will hardly kindle a straw ; scarcely will it keep itself alive. But gather a handful of such together or fan them ; they will break into a blaze and feed themselves. So when Prophecy, instead of being a purely personal experience, became social ; when the prophet, instead of moving like a star apart, and burying a splendid secret in his own bosom, found himself one of a group, an order or system with power to assert and maintain itself, the first upward step had been taken.

(b) Hitherto Prophecy had been intermittent. At intervals, often of long duration, the prophetic spirit stirred in a man. Some crying evil stung him to a fine frenzy, and sent him out to invoke nameless penalties on the evil-doer. Then the fire died down and he returned to his old life, becoming a private person once again. Such activity, however beneficial, had two great drawbacks. The effect was lessened by the intervals of inaction, of silence and suspense ; while (and this was more serious) it was marred by the extravagance which is sure to characterize such intermittent action. It suffered, in truth, from the opposite extremes

of over- and under-activity. But when a youth joined one of these schools, he gave his life to the service of God and man. Removed from ordinary employment, he learned to interpret the prophetic calling in such a way that it should cover all his time and claim all his energies. He dwelt less on the occasional and convulsive which disfigured early prophecy, and laid stress on the permanent and normal, on a well-ordered life, a well-furnished mind, a well-disciplined spirit—in a word, on character. Even in tilling the ground and securing his simple food, he felt himself to be a prophet and practised diligence, patience, and self-control as religious virtues, while the study of History and the social conditions of his age, prepared him to respond more effectively to the prophetic afflatus when it came again. Any string, if tightly strung and smartly struck, will emit some sort of musical note. But the tone of a violin depends neither on the string nor on the stroke so much as on the body of the instrument, the material of which it is made and the angles of its construction. So men began to supersede the old ideal of isolated and irresponsible ecstasy by moral conceptions of life and duty.¹

(c) As the prophet himself, swept away by a force which he did not understand and could not control, so was his influence over others. It was mainly non-ethical. As a rule, his appeal was to fear and force. He would hire the dagger of an assassin, or stir a mob to mutiny. Even Elijah was a man of blood. But, as he came to know himself and his calling better, the prophet felt that it was no longer within his rights to make such an appeal. He abstained from direct and

personal intervention in politics. He dwelt on moral and spiritual ideals which, if apprehended, must of themselves revolutionize men's lives. Particularly he dwelt on the thought of God, not as one of many natural forces, but as apart from these and controlling them, a moral agent, a God of righteousness and truth. He dwelt too on the relation of Jehovah to His people, the covenant relation, fraught as it was with immeasurable blessing, but also imposing solemn obligations. That is to say, generalizing from their own experience, the prophets grasped the thought that truth is not a dead force, like a blow which, if it does not tell at once, shattering whatever opposes it, will not tell at all, but a living force such as is hidden in a seed, working slowly but surely, by absorption and assimilation, and reproducing itself in ever higher forms. So we find them busying themselves less with the present, which was often hopelessly bad ; turning their faces toward the future, dwelling on the idea of a Kingdom of God wherein all that should not be must cease, and all that should be must come to birth, whereof the guarantee, sole and sufficient, was the truth they uttered : " Thus saith the Lord." It is hardly possible to overestimate the moral distance between Balaam, hired by a heathen king to curse Israel, and Amos rebuking their sins in the name of their God ; between Saul stripping himself naked at Samuel's feet and Jeremiah pouring out his heart before the Lord. Nor do we realize what Prophecy could be, till we pass from the Old to the New Testament and see the eleven Galileans, simple brave-hearted men, as they gathered round their Lord, with no link but a

common loyalty to Him, no preparation for work but the memory of three happy years spent with Him, no Gospel to preach but that which they heard from His lips as He spoke to them of the Father.

In the first Christian century, the prophet, though overshadowed by the apostle, is still an outstanding figure; and in the group of prophets at Antioch (Acts xiii.) we may see something that corresponds to the prophetic schools of the Old Testament. The predictive element is still at work, as in Agabus;¹ the ecstatic is not yet wholly eliminated, as we see in the Corinthian Church; but in the main, prophecy had become a purely spiritual force. Its influence was felt along three lines: in the conduct of public worship where the impassioned utterance of the prophet wrought powerfully on darkened Gentile minds; in the exercise of discipline when, as "spiritual men,"² they used their insight and experience to restore to penitence those who had wandered from the fold; and in the selection of the more regular officers of the Church, as in the case of Timothy. A fine example of New Testament prophecy may be found in Barnabas, the modest, kindly, wise old man whose character was one of the great assets of the primitive Church. He was "a good man,"³ and may well have sat to St. Paul as the original of that exquisite portrait of a Christian minister, still preserved for us with unfading colours in 1 Cor. xiii.,—"Charity suffereth long and is kind."

In the Sub-apostolic Age, the prophets multiplied

¹ Acts xi. 28.

² Gal. vi. 1.

³ 2 Acts xi. 24.

rapidly. They moved from place to place and were a living link between distant Churches by whom they were always received with honour. They presided at the Lord's Table, were at liberty to dispense with the forms of prayer imposed on others, and were supported by the free-will offerings of those who benefited by their experience and gifts. Thus in the *Didachê* we read : " Every firstfruits of the produce of the winepress and the threshing-floor, of oxen and sheep, thou shalt take and give to the prophets. If thou bakest bread, take the first of it and give it according to the commandment. In like manner, when thou openest a jar of wine or oil, take the first of it and give to the prophets." ¹

The Montanist movement in the second half of the second century was the last outburst of the old prophetic fire, and, with all its extravagance, it was a healthful protest and reaction against the rigid formalism which was chilling the life of the Church.

The course of events I have thus described, the formation of Prophetic Schools and their survival into Christian times, brought with it one outstanding and persistent danger, to which, in the end, Prophecy succumbed. So soon as it became an Order and had established itself as an institution within the nation and the Church, it began to draw to itself men who had no affinity with its real nature and aims. There were those who entered the Order, as others had entered the Priesthood, for a morsel of bread, for the comfortable maintenance it secured them. The training it gave, the stimulus that came with comradeship, tided them

¹ *Did.* xiii.

over the initial difficulties of what they regarded as a profession. They reeled off their oracles, and used, deftly and with consummate effect, religious phraseology that had no influence on their own hearts and lives. "A prophet," says the *Didachê*, "who orders a meal in the Spirit and eats it, who does not practise what he preaches, who asks for money, is a false prophet." So in the *Shepherd of Hermas*: "Test the prophet by his life. The man who seems to have the Spirit but exalts himself, who wishes to have the best seat, who is bold and impudent and talkative, who lives in luxury and will not prophesy unless he receives a reward, is a false prophet."¹ Against this danger there was just one safeguard, so far as the prophet himself was concerned: a severe self-scrutiny and constant watchfulness. The true prophets felt themselves to be divinely called. Sometimes they resisted the call passionately, as men who knew the risk it involved and shrank from measuring themselves with a task which was too great for them; but in the end they never failed to yield. "O Lord, Thou hast enticed me and I was enticed; Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed."²

Perhaps we shall best do justice to our subject if we attempt a brief study of one of the great prophets. I select Hosea, whose little book, beyond any other, may be regarded as the Gospel of the Old Testament.

The first three chapters call for a critical reconstruction which, if wisely carried through, rids them of something repellent, but leaves untouched, as a central

¹ *Hermas Mandata* xi.

² *Jer.* xx. 7.

fact, the tragedy of the prophet's ruined home and broken heart.¹ It is hardly needful to insist that we have more here than an allegory, a tale trumped up to serve as an illustration, the scaffold for a sermon, a peg on which to hang a lesson. No one, from a merely literary interest, could trifle thus with his own honour and the feelings of his audience. Hosea writes in a moment of absolute sincerity and deep feeling, compelled by facts themselves more sad than any words, and known to all. Many a man has been soured by such a sorrow as his, driven from public life by such a stain on his honour. Hosea is saved from guilty silence by the conviction that Jehovah has been dealing with him, disciplining him for a more gracious ministry in days to come. "Spirits are not finely touched, save to fine issues." It was easy to project the earthly on the heavenly ; and, in his own home rifled of its dearest treasure, to see the heart of God. For was not Israel Jehovah's Bride ? Had He not redeemed her ; boasted of her to all the nations as His peerless one, His undefiled ? She had proved unfaithful ; yet He loved her still. That was the prophet's message ringing out, constant and clear. The covenant relation between Jehovah and Israel had not yet stiffened into a legal deed, binding the contracting persons. It throbs with the wild alarm and passionate sorrow of a disappointed lover. Every note is here, from detestation to tenderness and triumph.

In the heart of the book (chaps. iv.-ix.) we find a

¹ See article on Hosea in the *American Journal of Semitic Languages*, January 1906.

diagnosis of Israel's moral condition, which need not detain us long. The truth is told with mournful emphasis and terrible realism. Three points may be noted:—

(a) The covenant relation involves the unity of Israel as a nation. Hence Hosea, though himself belonging to the North, has no hesitation in condemning the secession of the ten tribes and the very existence of the Northern Kingdom. That was the *fons et origo* of all the unrest and confusion, the political decay which followed. It was worse than a blunder; it was a crime. It made it impossible to realize the purpose of Jehovah which had regard neither to the North nor to the South, but to the nation as a whole.

“They have set up kings, but not by me.

They have made them princes, and I knew it not.”¹

(b) Again, the covenant relation imposes on Israel a certain strict reserve in her intercourse with other nations. It was Jehovah's business to care for her, to champion her cause; yet she had hired lovers and mingled herself with foreign folk. Assyria had a fatal fascination for her; even Egypt proved seductive. The result could only be a hopeless absorption into the great world-powers, the decay and dissolution of her national life. Yet Jehovah had His rights, and was not prepared to cede them to any.

“Though they have hired lovers among the nations,
Now will I gather them.”²

(c) Still further, Hosea is the first to pronounce against the local shrines with their sensuous rites, and particularly against the worship of the calf. No doubt,

¹ Chap. viii. 4.

² Chap. viii. 10.

as an embodiment of vital energy, the calf had been selected merely as a symbol of Jehovah. But it is always difficult to maintain the distinction between a sign and the thing signified. Virtually the calf had taken Jehovah's place, and the people were sinking fast to the level of that which they worshipped—a brute beast. Against it Hosea polishes the shaft of a delicate irony. Man-made, Jehovah rejects it; the people tremble for it; they shall see it borne as tribute to the Assyrian king.¹ Such worship is proof of a hopeless misconception of the real nature and claims of Him whom they profess to worship.

“My people perish for lack of knowledge.”²

It would of course be a great mistake to suppose that the people accept the prophet's verdict on themselves. He sees them going with their flocks and herds to seek Jehovah, perplexed because they cannot find Him.³ He hears the utterance of what seems a genuine repentance: “Come and let us return unto the Lord”⁴; but what does it amount to? “Their goodness is like the morning cloud or like dew vanishing quickly away.” There is no steadfastness of purpose in them. Moral instability is their bane. In a single chapter⁵ he employs a succession of striking figures to bring this out. Ephraim is a cake not turned; a silly dove fluttering from side to side; a deceitful bow, with a twist in the grain, so that, aim as you will, it miscarries. And the worst is that this unsatisfactory condition cannot continue. Character, as Amos had pointed out, tends to be fixed and final. It is so

¹ Chap. viii. 5 and x. 5 and 6.

³ Chap. v. 6.

⁴ Chap. vi. 1.

² Chap. iv. 6.

⁵ Chap. vii.

already with the people : " Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone." ¹

From chap. ix. 9 to chap. xii., in a brief but interesting section, the prophet carries his hearers back to early and happier days in their history. " I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness." " When Israel was a child I loved him and called my son out of Egypt." " The Lord hath a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways, according to their doings will He recompense them. He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God. Yea, he had power over the angel and prevailed ; he wept, and made supplication unto Him." ²

It is to the fine psychological study underlying this passage I would direct you ; nothing could be more helpful to those whose task it will be to waken the better nature in their fellow-men. Let me put it thus.

If you have tried in vain to recall the name of a friend, what should you do ? Attack the problem indirectly. Recall the scene where last you met him, in such a garden ; the roses at your feet, the apples ripening overhead, the sun so many degrees above the horizon. Think of others who were present then. Name them one by one. Recall what they said and did. Fill in the picture till nothing seems wanting to its completeness but the name of your friend. That will not be wanting long. Unbidden it emerges ; springs into memory of its own accord. The more vivid and varied the picture, the more compelling

¹ Chap. iv. 17.

² Chap. xii. 2-4.

is the impulse which brings up into consciousness the absent factor needed to complete it.

Now on that law of association the prophet builds. He recalls to his people the kindness of their youth, the love of their espousals, halcyon days when all was calm and bright. Under the spell of his eloquence the wilderness lies around them once more; the manna, the smitten rock, the cloudy pillar are there. His hope is that what he has failed to achieve will achieve itself; that the inner ear of the people will open, Jehovah's voice be heard, and the old glad response be given again. "She shall sing there as in the days of her youth."

A distinguished headmaster,¹ writing to one of his staff, makes the following remark: "A practical hint! If ever emotionally throwing your whole force to change a boy's way of thinking from wrong to right, use his Christian name. It acts on the old home associations and helps to soften him; and if you soften him, you win him." It is on this principle Hosea acts. He plays skilfully with such names as Jacob and Israel, Bethel and Peniel; recalling the people from what they are to what they were and may yet be. For the covenant relation between Jehovah and Israel involves the unity not only of North and South, but of past and present in her history. Thus he writes: "He (Jehovah) found him (Jacob) at Bethel, and there He spake *with us*."² It is true, the Greek versions read either "to him" or "to them." But if either of these was original, it is difficult to explain the actual text. And, rightly under-

¹ Dr. Almond, of Loretto.

² Chap. xii. 4. 

stood, how finely it is in keeping with the idea which pervades the whole passage, the unity of a people from first to last in the gracious purpose of their God.

Was it not thus our Lord taught—setting a little child in the midst to teach these grey-bearded Pharisees and His own hot-headed disciples? A child's sweet ways make us all children again; a snatch of a song, a pet name, will stir the heart of a man grown hard or dead, and make it easy to pray, as perhaps he has not prayed for years: "Our Father." *Ars artem celare*; you must master this elementary principle of pedagogy, till you come unconsciously to act on it. To have brought a man back to himself is to find him not far from God.

What then was the result? Twofold—Judgment and Mercy. Judgment is first. Here the peculiar intensity of Hosea's spirit comes out. To him, the sin of Israel is not the breach of a law however sacred; it is the betrayal of Love. And for the sin against Love, as for the sin against the Holy Ghost, there is no forgiveness; the penalty is death. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself."¹ He sees the people (it is always the people as a unity that concerns him) going down to Sheôl, the gloomy underworld, of which, as of Dante's *Inferno*, it is true: "Who enters here leaves Hope behind." But though Hope cannot enter, Love can. The gloom of the underworld is lit up; its cavernous silence is broken. The voice of Love is heard summoning Death to do his uttermost, and bidding defiance to all the powers of Hell. "O Death, where are thy plagues?"

¹Chap. xiii, 9.

Into that realm of Death, like another Orpheus, Love goes down, and returns victorious: "I will ransom thee from the power of the grave. I will redeem thee from Death." And then follows that great word which, in my judgment, calls neither for emendation nor for transposition—the last word of a Love which can no more fail of its final purpose than it can shrink from the use of any means by which that purpose may be realized—Love unflinching, unswerving, all-subduing, the Love that is Life and therefore must conquer Death: "Repentance is hid from Mine eyes."¹

So from the gloomy underworld the scene shifts again to the upper world of sunlight and good cheer. We note particularly the freedom and spontaneity which breathes through the closing chapter,² indicating a repentance sincere and therefore its own safeguard, as permanent as it is profound. Instead of the recesses of a darkened home where a faithless wife is kept in enforced seclusion, there lies about us all the breadth and beauty of the land crowned by the snowy peaks of Hermon, with vineyards and cornfields, where a happy people move at will, needing no locks, knowing no limits, because they abide in love. "They shall return and dwell under His shadow. They shall grow as the vine, and spread forth roots like Lebanon. Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him and observed him. I am like a green fir tree; from me is thy fruit found."

Such is the Ministry of Reconciliation as conceived

¹ Chap. xiii. 14.

² Chap. xiv.

by an Old Testament prophet, and to-day, beneath the cross of Christ, we know no other.

“ Oh Love of God, oh sin of man,
In that dread hour your strength was tried,
And victory remains with Love,—
Jesus our Lord is crucified.”

CHAPTER II

THE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY

IF we set aside the various uses of the word Apostle in classic Greek, and confine ourselves to the New Testament, we have still to distinguish between its general, and a somewhat narrow and more technical, sense. Etymologically, an Apostle is any man who is sent on an errand. Thus we read of Apostles of the churches ; men who were commissioned to preach the Gospel and carry the greetings of one Christian community to another. Among these were Barnabas, Silas, Junius and Andronicus (" of note among the Apostles "),¹ and Epaphroditus, whose good offices to St. Paul, as the representative of the Philippian Church, are gratefully recorded.² In this general sense we meet with Apostles even in the second century. In the *Didachê* provision is made for their entertainment as they move from place to place, while their liberties are carefully circumscribed. They must not stay with a church more than one day, or, under special circumstances, two days. If they linger to the third day, there is no appeal ; they must go. They are to travel without style or state, taking with them bread enough for the next stage of their journey. If they ask for money, they are discredited as false to their calling.³

¹ Rom. xvi. 7.

² Phil. ii. 25.

³ Did. xi. 5 and 6.

In the technical sense of the word, Apostles are men who have known Christ in the flesh and been chosen by Him to bear witness of Him and His Resurrection. Originally they were twelve in number. One fell from grace and his place was taken by Matthias, who was chosen by lot. The name of Paul may be added to the list, as of one who had seen the Lord; although his claim was stubbornly contested by the Jewish party in the Church. In this technical sense, the word came slowly into use. In St. Matthew's Gospel, it occurs only once, with the qualification needful to mark its restricted use: The twelve Apostles. In Mark's Gospel also it occurs only once, with reference to a special mission of the twelve. Luke, who inclines to the older classic usage, employs it much more frequently.

The twelve Apostles were the eyes, ears, and hands of their Lord. Through them He saw, from them He heard, what was passing; and by them He ministered to the needs of the people. In the Book of Acts there is no suggestion of Apostolic authority. The influence of Peter and Paul is mainly personal, and even they are overshadowed by James who, as the brother of our Lord, may represent an earlier form of church government, based on lineage, which did not long survive. But in the Apocalypse we read that the names of the twelve Apostles were graven on the twelve foundations of the City of God; and from this we infer that, by the end of the first century, their position and authority was well established within the Church.

Four things go to the making of a teacher: early

training, natural temper, hard thinking, and the mellowing influence of time. Each of these may be seen as the formative influence in one or other of the writers to whom we owe the major part of the New Testament. Something of value for our ministerial fitness may be gained if, in the spirit of eager and ingenuous youth, we go the round of the four Schools which, by the close of the first century, had given its final form to the Church's life and work.

I

Naturally we begin at Jerusalem. No modern University, not Dublin, Oxford, nor Paris, has been to any of us what Jerusalem was to the Church of the first century. To climb the steep ascent and pass for the first time through her ancient gates, to inscribe his name among the students of Gamaliel or Hillel, was the experience of a lifetime to many a Jewish youth. And for a Christian Jew the place had an added sanctity as the cradle of his Faith. Bethlehem and Bethany were within easy reach ; Gethsemane and Calvary were at the door. Arrived at Jerusalem, we find our way without hesitation to the Synagogue or School presided over by James, surnamed the Just. Legend has been busy with his name ; and possibly it is a disappointment to find that, on a wintry day, he does not refuse the comfort of a woollen garment, that no golden plate with mystic letters flashes from his brow, that no one has actually seen him emerge like the High Priest from the Penetralia of the Temple. But a holy life is more than a linen ephod. " Deep on his front engraven, Deliberation sits and public care." One consideration lends authority to his every word ; he

is the kinsman of Jesus the Messiah. True, he does not dwell on the natural tie ; but his every reference to our Lord breathes conviction and reverence. He subscribes himself : The Servant of the Lord. Jesus is for him the Lord of Glory, the Judge, for Whose coming and final award the world waits. He speaks of all Christians as bearing that shining name (τὸ καλὸν ὄνομα) conferred in Baptism, which it were blasphemy to deny.

To James there is nothing new or revolutionary in the Christian Faith. It is rather a natural development of the Old. He never speaks of it as a Gospel, but always as the Law. Abraham, Job, Elijah, all honoured names, are his great exemplars ; and in their patience and devotion he sees, as in a mirror, what every Christian should aspire to be. But it is a transfigured Law, broadly and therefore profoundly human in its interpretation of life. It is the perfect Law, royal not only in the authority with which it speaks but in the freedom it confers, summed up in one word, Love. Hitherto it has failed for lack of motive power ; as republished by Jesus it is no more a dead letter but a living spirit, the Word of Truth. James describes it as the engrafted or implanted word,¹ a phrase which, while it recalls Plato's question, Is virtue imposed or implanted ?,² suggests the inwardness and naturalness of an experience which the great Athenian never knew. He speaks of the Law of Liberty—surely a new and noble conception which may well place him among the foremost of the world's teachers.

All students of theology are recommended to spend a year in the school of James. The defect imputed to

¹ τὸν ἐμφυτον λόγον.

² διακτὸν ἢ ἐμφυτον.

the teaching of this great servant of Jesus is rather chargeable to ourselves.¹ A sturdy Evangelical like Luther may dismiss the Epistle of James as "a right strawy Epistle";² yet not in vain has it won and kept for itself a place in the sacred Canon. Writing of the aristocracy of England, Emerson says, "The lawyer, farmer, silk-mercator, lies perdu beneath many a coronet, winking to the antiquary to say nothing." In the same way the Epistle of James lies perdu behind the theology of Paul and the mysticism of John, and I do not see that we need be ashamed of it. The Church may be too evangelical in tone. Witness that honoured father of the Scottish Church who rejected the *Imitation* of à Kempis, "because neither the sacrifice of Christ nor the doctrine of grace has a place in it." A relapse into what is called Moderate Theology is usually the recoil from an ultra-Evangelicalism which, in its zeal for doctrines, has no place for the moralities and civilities of the Christian life. Often beneath an impassive and phlegmatic exterior, you will find the glow of a genuine devotion to the person and work of Christ. The Church may outlive her childhood; but there will always be children at her feet, men and women in whom the speculative interest is dormant, practical rather than passionate in temper. In dealing with these, James imposes on us a patience which is not so much tolerance of error as recognition of the highest in the humblest, of the new life in the rudimentary form from which it has not yet extricated itself.

¹ See an interesting note on Jas. i. 25 in Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*, under Aphorism xxiii.

² See Westcott on *The Canon of the New Testament*, p. 477.

II

From Jerusalem, the Beautiful, the Terrible, with the blood of the last of the prophets on her skirts, we turn—but whither? East or west; to the Tigris or the Tiber? It matters not; to some great centre of life and letters in the Gentile world, where already a school of Christian thought is rising, presided over by St. Peter. To escape the censorship, lately established, let us call it “Babylon.”

One cannot be long here without feeling the difference. It is a bigger world in which we are moving now, with wider horizon and more bracing air; yet the old and the essential persists. Distinctive in the teaching of Peter is the personal note, his relation to our Lord. Three years spent with Jesus have left on his memory the indelible impression of one singularly fair, nay absolutely faultless.¹ He speaks of Jesus as of “a Lamb without blemish and without spot.” He claims to have been a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and has much to tell of those last sad hours—the mad rage of the crowd, the frail body of their victim, bent by pain, the cross itself, a common gibbet, a tree, on which they crucified the Lord of Glory. There is a realism in all this which might be distasteful were it not for the soft light shed over it by the Resurrection. Indeed to Peter the Resurrection is not so much an event as an experience; a second birth into a new world through which he moves freely as one who, after long exile, has come

¹ Cf. address put in his lips by Luke—Acts x. 36-43.

to his own. He speaks of an inheritance, and heaps up epithets to express its greatness. At times one catches a note almost of condescension when he turns to those who have never seen the Lord. But he checks himself, as if mindful that the spiritual, which alone is real, is always universal. The prize of life, the crown of manhood, the measure of the world, Jesus is *τίμη*, not precious only but the price, sole standard of values to all who believe on Him. No doubt personality counts for much. This man, eager, impetuous, aspiring, first to confess Jesus as the Son of God, is always stimulating as a teacher. We are told that he once leaped out of a boat and essayed to walk on the water to go to Jesus, saved from sinking only by the grasp of an outstretched hand. And that was not the only time he ventured forth where others feared to tread. Very early the Christian synagogues in Judea were convulsed by the news that this man, a son of the Law, had preached the gospel to a Roman centurion and baptized a Gentile household. For a time he drew back from a step which was prompted by his heart rather than approved by his head. But he abides by what he then did as according to the purpose of God and the testimony of the prophets. In his teaching there is no note of the narrow or national. He appeals to a Church in which "the preponderating and characteristic" factor is certainly not Jewish. This Catholic note, this outlook on the Gentile world, is admirable; sometimes one asks: Whither does it lead?

In the letter which bears his name, there are obscure and difficult passages. Can there be light without

shadow ; reason without an irreducible minimum of the irrational and mysterious ? Like rainbow hues woven out of drifting clouds, the wrack of the storm in a Highland glen, it appears that the bright world in which this man moves is based on abysmal depths of gloom which still persist, though shot through by light from the Cross. Vague hints are dropped of "spirits in prison" to whom Jesus preached. But when pressed to explain himself, he lays his finger on his lips and points us upwards. Softly gleaming, subtly inter-fused through the material things we see and feel, hovers the spirit world that claims us as its own. "Which things the angels desire to look into."

I find in Peter the born comrade of all brave, strong souls. Hours spent with him are an excellent antidote to the depression which creeps over a forlorn hope such as Christianity sometimes seems to be. Writing to men who were strangers on earth, for whom already the fires of persecution were kindled, he reminds them that, if the furnace is heated seven times, One is with them who is like unto the Son of God. Christ also has suffered. And in the meekness and patience with which they suffer, he sees a gleam as of gold tried in the fire, the promise of a faith that shall be unto praise and honour and glory. He will have us live in a future which for him is even now present. He speaks of the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls, as "ready to be revealed." One sees him girding up the loins of his mind, as if to run a race, his eye upon the goal. For him Christianity is not so much a reasoned conviction as a temper, a living hope which purifies the soul. In all this we see natural

endowment chastened by long and painful experience. He bears himself bravely yet humbly, as one who knows his own weakness but knows also the power of God.

Peter is at his best in dealing with candidates for the Holy Ministry. With them he lays aside the apostle, and is "the servant of Jesus Christ." At such a time there is an indefinable pathos and solemnity in his tone, the secret of which is not far to seek. It appears that, after the great confession, he three times denied his Lord. The sequel was an incident which, though he never directly refers to it, must have been constantly in his mind. He had been fishing all night with the sons of Zebedee. Nothing had been taken, when, as the day dawned, they saw a stranger on the shore who hailed them, and bade them improve on their art by casting their nets on the right side of the ship. In a dull, mechanical way they complied, and straightway the nets were filled with fishes. It was the Lord! Girding his coat about him, Peter sprang into the surf and swam ashore, to fling himself at the feet of Jesus. Then when the nets were drawn in, and they had broken their fast, Jesus turned full on the penitent disciple. Three times was put the question: Lovest thou Me? and three times came the answer: Thou knowest that I love Thee. I have heard it said that it is impossible to represent in English the graceful and significant alternation between the ἀγαπᾷς με of the Master and the φιλῶ σε of the disciple, the one implying a high and sacred passion, the other suggestive rather of attachment and affection. But I think we can match it in the Doric of my native

country. I have a friend, a young fisherman. You may find him by the shore on a summer morning, calking his boat or patching the worn brown sail ; a quiet, earnest, simple soul as ever was. He is never absent from his place on Sunday, but comes to Communion rarely and always with diffidence. I can fancy the following dialogue between him and our Lord : “ Donald, do ye love Me ? ” “ I like ye weel.” “ But do ye love Me, Donald ? ” “ I daurna’ say I love ye, but I like ye weel.” “ Well then, Donald, do ye like Me ? ” “ And why will ye be asking me three times over what yersel’ kens fine ? I like ye weel. Man, I could dee for ye ! ”

In Peter we see the Christian pastor coming to birth. According to him to be a minister is not to be so much a teacher as a shepherd of souls. The first, second, and third requisite for the office, according to him, is Love, Love, Love. He will have you do your work not of constraint but willingly, for Love has no bands ; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, for Love is its own reward ; not as lords over God’s heritage, but as ensamples to the flock, for Love is an embodied Law.¹ So he goes his way—no hireling he ; expectant of the day when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, whose approval is the crown of life.

III

St. Paul, as we know him, is the resultant of various opposing forces. By birth a Jew, he stood forth early as a champion, “ *der wissenschaftliche Vertreter*,” of

¹ 1 Pet. v. 1-4.

the Pharisaic school ; yet his conversion flung him into the Christian camp. To the last a Hebrew of the Hebrews, his first appeal always and everywhere was to the Jew, his kinsman after the flesh ; yet Jewish rejection of the Messiah drove him, almost against his will, to be an apostle of the Gentiles. He revered the Law and read into it, more than any man of his age, a wealth of spiritual meaning and promise ; yet his own experience, the sense of moral impotence and spiritual bankruptcy which it wrought in him, compelled him to deny it any but a subordinate and disciplinary function in the religious history of the race. It is not easy to say what Paul did for Christianity ; it is easy to see what Christianity did for him. It saved him from the futility, the barren subtleties of the Rabbinic schools. How easily might his manhood, rich and energetic, have spent itself in vain, like a stream that spreads out in shallow reaches and loses itself in a stagnant marsh. That could never be after he had met with Christ. Conversion was for him a new birth ; it sent him out with a sense of power, a unity of purpose, he had never known before, on his great career of practical and beneficent activity for the redemption of the world. Very noble was his response to the appeal of the Crucified. For him it was " the utmost for the Highest." He is the first Missionary Bishop. One sees him passing from city to city, from shore to shore. From Troas he sights Mount Athos, like a man's hand, beckoning him across the sea. Corinth and Athens are stepping-stones to Rome ; Rome a halfway house to Spain. And each fresh departure registers a corresponding enlargement of his mental horizon. He could

never doubt that God had *found him* in Jesus Christ ; there was therefore no temptation either to disown the old or to deny the new. His one business was to study the development and forecast the fulfilment of an eternal purpose revealed in the Cross. For this man, life was one long adventure in the Realm of Thought. He sees new vistas open, new heights unveiled, new possibilities stirring, that leave him on tiptoe of expectation. His eager spirit knows no rest till the Christ, revealed to him at Damascus, is enthroned as the Messiah of the Jews, the Saviour of the world, the Heir of all the ages, the Eternal Son of God. Thus St. Paul becomes the brain of the new movement, the great Doctor of the Christian Church, pre-eminently the thinker. From this point of view, he well deserves our study. It is one thing to preach a simple Gospel ; another, to ring the changes on words that long ago have lost their meaning for ourselves. Let us beware lest, behind a phrase, beautiful and true in itself, we shelter that natural indolence which is the disgrace of our profession. We must think, think, think ; and if sometimes we think amiss, even that is safer than not to think at all. A man's influence as a teacher depends not so much on the stage he has reached as on the speed with which he moves in the pursuit of truth. Your theological equipment may be meagre, if only your interest in theological questions is great and growing. Intellectual Stagnation, Orthodoxy at a standstill, that is the bane of the Christian ministry.

Let me beg you specially to study the Idealism of St. Paul. Suppose that, in imagination, we visit the Corinthian Church a few months after St. Paul has left it.

Sailing up a beautiful bay, we land at one of its crowded wharves. With a glance at the famous Rock and the amphitheatre outside the gates, we find our way down a back street and through a narrow court to the little room where the Christians meet. The evening shadows are falling, as, one by one, they gather in. Some of them have that refinement which is the mark of Greek civilization ; the majority bear the brand of a servile race ; not a few are marred by the excesses of a vicious life, the horrible pit and the miry clay from which they have been rescued. It is not a promising group ; and the prospect does not brighten when you learn that, though few, they are hopelessly divided. Some say : We are of Paul ; others : We are of Apollos. There are some who degrade the awful and blessed Name which is the heritage of all into a party cry, saying : We are of Christ. The atmosphere of the place is oppressive ; we long to escape into the freedom and sunlight even of a Pagan city. Yet these are the men whom, in a letter just opened and read, Paul salutes in glowing terms of appreciation. It is impossible to attribute ignorance to him, rather we are compelled to admire the wisdom with which he deals with facts that he cannot deny. He declines to be involved in their disputes. He overlooks their narrow limits. Broken-hearted by what he has heard of their relapse into practical Paganism, he dare not compromise and will not spare. Yet first of all he holds up before them that splendid conception of the Christian life to which by their baptism they were bound, and which, thanks be to God, none of them has yet forfeited. He salutes them as saints in Christ. Even the sun has spots ;

but it is not the spots that shine. There is mud in the Thames ; but it is not the mud that makes the river. There is no Church on earth that is not more or less materialized by its surroundings ; nor one that may not hold fast that high ideal of a Christian Church which floats before the apostle's eye. I am convinced that the difference between us as men, and still more as ministers, lies here. All men have, but some have more strongly than others, the power of idealizing, seeing the best and making the most of others. A man is a sculptor because in the shapeless marble he sees the beautiful form that is entangled there, and itches in every finger to let it loose. St. Paul was an apostle, never doubted his calling, because God had taught him to see the possibilities latent in the lowest, the saint in the sinner. Idealism, more than anything else, makes the evangelist

Think of home life. It would be an amiable absurdity to suppose that every father is like Abraham, able to rule his own house ; every mother a Madonna, a symphony in soft tones and subdued colours. Incompatibility of temper is accentuated by neighbourhood. It is no wonder that many youths fret to escape from the unsympathetic and repressive conditions of home life. But the fault is not wholly in the home. By what accident is it that all great men seem to have had great fathers and beautiful mothers ? or is it, perchance, by no accident, but by the projection of themselves on their surroundings ? Read what Carlyle has to say of the homely but high-souled peasant he was proud to call his father. Read *Margaret Ogilvie*, and see what a man of genius says of " the ineffable and mysterious glow of motherhood "

he saw lighting up the plain face that was for him the most beautiful on earth. Hugh Miller says : I have a keen recollection of the joy that lighted up our home when my father came back from sea. Livingstone, a pitman's son says : I revere the memory of my father. John Paton has a thrilling story to tell of triumphs in Polynesia ; I would give it all away rather than the portrait he has penned of a father whom he calls " the guardian angel of my life." Home and heaven are kindred points ; and, if heaven has ever opened over your head, home will be the most sacred spot on earth to you. You will understand how St. Paul writes to children : Obey your parents in the Lord ; and of marriage : This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and His Church. Idealism, that makes the evangelist, is indispensable to the pastor.

Very instructive are the glimpses we get into the heart of this man who never sinks the pastor even in the missionary or the theologian. " Though ye have ten thousand instructors, yet have ye not many fathers ; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you in the gospel." What prayers are his, bridging broad seas ! Dear distant faces gather round him as he kneels. Time and space break up ; his little room becomes an audience chamber where business of great moment for eternity is transacted. And what shall we say of his letters ? The style is not to be commended—abrupt and obscure to the point of unintelligibility, so that no one will ever know whether Titus was circumcised or not. But one quality it never lacks, the mark of all great style. It is the reflex of the writer's self, vivid and direct, full of interjections, parentheses, apostrophes, above all, of

superlatives. For Paul lived in a world of vast magnitudes, immeasurable, unsearchable, among which his spirit revelled till it outgrew the use of speech. Then he bowed in silent adoration.

Such, then, is Paul : and how many whom the Logic of the Thinker left untouched have been subdued by the passion of the man !

IV

The date of Paul's martyrdom was *circa* 66 A.D. The closing decades of the century, otherwise vacant and obscure, are lighted up for us by the figure and face of the aged John. In his youth he had been a disciple of the Baptist, and had seen Jesus with the Baptist's eyes as the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world. We know how powerfully he was attracted, how profoundly and permanently he was affected by what he saw and heard. Later on, he disappears from the stage. Apparently he was not present at the Council of Jerusalem. So far as we know, he took no part in the great controversy between the Jewish and Gentile Churches. Nor can we say by what stages, or under what influences, he drifted far from his early moorings and found himself in a lonely old age in the heart of a pagan city in Asia Minor. To-day, Ephesus is little more than a memory. Silence has fallen over her once busy streets ; her buildings are in ruins. Instead of the broad bay where Roman galleys rode at anchor and corn ships from Alexandria were unloaded at the crowded wharves, you see a grassy plain stretching to the far horizon, where a

few shepherds graze their flocks. What Ephesus is to-day, the old world in which he was born had already become to John ; he speaks of it as " passing away." A new world of eternal realities has broken on him, in and for which he now lives. Age has been described as second childhood ; and there is something childlike in the style of this old man. He harps at times on a single string, seeking by the simple device of reiteration to enforce conviction on himself and others. " That which we have seen, and heard, and handled of the Word of Life, declare we unto you." He builds no more the lofty argument. Thought unfolds like a flower ; it passes, like a stream, in easy uninterrupted flow, from point to point. Abstract ideas find expression in symbolic phrases. We see in him, above all else, the mellowing influence of time.

The teaching of St. John, as contained in his First Epistle, may be summed up in three words : Life, Light, Love.

" The Life was manifested." Life is always manifesting itself, finding new form and expression ; but this is " the Life," that manifestation of the Divine to which unhesitatingly the writer traces what is best and noblest in human history. Then the Life is identified with Light. It is Life not struggling with death, obscured by its surroundings, but calm, clear, conscious of its aims and destiny, Light conquering the Darkness that lies around. Light and Darkness for St. John mean Truth and Error ; and just so far as the life of God is in us, we are enabled to discern the spirits, to distinguish Truth from Error in the world. We must, however,

note that while God is Light, we, if we are His, walk in the Light. To us it is an atmosphere which plays on us, and appeals to us, but to which we must turn, opening our hearts to it, if it is to rule within us. And then the thought of Light leads to that of Love. For as, where Light, is there will be heat ; so, where there is Truth, there will be Love. Put it thus. Darkness isolates ; in the dark we are alone even amid a crowd. But when the Light peers in, we find ourselves related, united, to those about us. This is that Fellowship in Light of which the apostle speaks and to which he summons us as the natural outcome and only test of the Divine life within. " Beloved, let us love one another, not in word only," *i.e.* in empty compliment, but in substantial sacrificial deed and truth. And here again we notice that the phrase, The Love of God, or, His Love, means not only God's love to us, but often ours to Him, or, for His sake, to others. That is to say, Love in all its manifestations, in Him and in us, in us to Him and to one another, is still the same. It is the one Life in its many forms. At this point (chap. iv.) a backward movement of thought begins ; the tide returns on itself. Quite naturally ; for the last is always the first, it is the cause manifested in its effect. If then the Life of God in us prompts us to love one another, this can only be because in God Himself Life and Love are one. So we read : " Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God." We are now in a position to appreciate the writer's standpoint. For him, the Cross is the central fact in Universal History. So far as God is concerned, it is a revelation ; for us men, it is an inspiration. Either way,

it is the adequate and final expression of that Love which is, for John, the Ultimate Reality of the Universe.

Readers of "A Death in the Desert" do not need to be reminded how Browning, the greatest religious teacher of last century, turned by instinct to St. John, and found there what was, for him, the heart and essence of the Christian Faith. A Love that is human because it is Divine; the weakness of Love, which is its strength; the seeming failure of Love, which proves to be its real triumph; that is the Gospel of St. John as reinterpreted for us by a great poet.

"Thou hast no power, nor canst conceive of Mine;
But Love I gave thee, with Myself to love,
And thou must love Me who have died for thee."

We saw how, for Hosea, the Covenant Relation breathes and burns with all the passion of love; it had not yet stiffened into a legal deed, binding contracting parties. We see it here returning to its original freedom and spirituality. The legal theology of St. Paul may be likened to the Planetary Heaven where the Eternal reveals itself through the rhythmic movement of temporal forms—sun, moon, and stars. John lifts us still higher into the boundless Empyrean, the dwelling-place of God and of His saints.

"God so loved the world that He gave His Son." The more we are possessed by that simple truth, the better fitted we shall be to discharge the Ministry of Reconciliation. While the Church carries at her girdle the golden key of Love, she cannot fail to lay open to men the inner sanctuary, the Heart of God; nor will they fail to respond and enter in.

CHAPTER III

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

I CAN well believe that the Pastoral Epistles, our subject for to-day, are as yet a *terra incognita* to many in my audience. You have dipped into them, no doubt, to find yourselves confronted by a familiar text, a striking figure, or a recondite allusion ; but as a rule you have given them a wide berth, regarding them as a dreary tract where the ecclesiastical supersedes the spiritual, and formal directions take the place of great religious principles. If I succeed in rescuing them from obscurity, if I tempt you to make them the subject of a careful study, if I convince you that they are of first-rate importance to a candidate for the Christian ministry, full not only of warning but of inspiration, I shall have achieved my purpose.

The date and authorship of the Pastoral Epistles have been much debated. Until lately, they were generally ascribed to St. Paul, under the belief that they were written after an earlier Roman imprisonment, before he stood his trial and met a martyr's death in Nero's palace. To-day, the trend of opinion is in another direction. Dr. Denney, *e.g.*, declares " that the general impression one gets from them is that, as a doctrine, Christianity is now complete and can be taken for

granted. There is nothing creative in the statement of it, which is rather a combination of fulness and formalism that raises doubt as to the authorship. St. Paul was inspired; the writer of these epistles is only orthodox. St. Paul could have said all that is here, but probably he would have said it otherwise, and not all at one time.”¹ Dr. Moffatt concludes “that they are the pseudonymous composition of a Paulinist who wrote during the period of transition into the Neo-Catholicism of the second century, with the aim of safeguarding the common Christianity of the age in terms of the great Pauline tradition. . . . The author knew St. Paul’s epistles and venerated his gospel; but he had access to some Pauline *reliquiæ* as well as to traditions which are not represented in St. Luke’s history.”² Now, when the arch-critic and the conservative theologian join hands over a question like this, it may be regarded as settled.

One word only I would say on this point. When Dr. Moffatt, as illustrating his theory of “Pauline boulders,” refers us to certain very bare statements of fact, personalia, entries in a traveller’s logbook,³ he is not in my judgment doing justice to the case. To the ordinary reader the Pauline element here is much more pervasive. There are statements of Christian doctrine which, if they were not written by St. Paul, would indicate the presence in the sub-apostolic age of a massive intellect and a fervid spirit of which we have otherwise no trace. There is, moreover, at least one

¹ See Moffatt’s *Introduction to the New Testament*.

² *Ibid.*

³ e.g. 2 Tim. iv. 12, 13.

passage in which the note of noble humility and self-depreciation characteristic of the Pauline epistles is reproduced in a way that seems beyond the reach of any mere imitation.¹ I should prefer to speak not of Pauline boulders but of a Pauline substratum overlaid by the loose soil of a later age. With this modification, we may adopt the critical position, and find just there what is of interest for us in these epistles. They are the latest utterance of the New Testament on the question of Ecclesiastical Organization. They mark the transition from the Church of the Apostles to that of the Early Fathers.

I

First, then, of the Christian Church as here described. For her origin we must go back to the Book of Acts. The day of Pentecost witnessed her birth ; and, like many a royal babe, she was richly dowered. Heaven opened over her head and supernatural gifts were showered about her cradle. We read, *e.g.*, of the gift of Tongues, inspired utterances which bore witness to the depth of the change wrought in many a lawless soul : a gift not less striking and valuable for the time than it proved perilous in the end. We read also of the gift of Discernment, by which spirits were tried and ecstatic utterances either expounded or exposed ; and, still further, of the gift of Healing, miracles of grace wrought on the bodily frame when worn by sickness or debauched by excess. Along with these, although

on a higher level, we may reckon as gifts of the Spirit apostles and prophets, of whom I have already spoken, with evangelists and teachers. Evangelists were men marked out by their special gifts for a roving ministry, men who could stir a crowd, initiate a religious movement, and thus lay the foundations of new churches. Teachers had the gift of knowledge, insight rather than ecstasy, and were of service in edifying converts; but their activity was probably confined to some one church. Now, in the Pastoral Epistles all these, if not passed, are passing; and it is remarkable that no note of regret is rung out as, one by one, they disappear. Already they form the background of a picture on the foreground of which, centre of interest for the new age, are the more regular and permanent means of grace by which the Church was henceforth to live—the Ministry as an office.

Here we have to note, first of all, the Bishop or Presbyter. The exact significance of these titles, with their origin and application, has been, and still is, keenly canvassed. According to Lightfoot¹ they were at first synonymous (as in Acts xx.); but later, under the pressure of new conditions and a growing need for unity of action and authority in doctrine, they came to be distinguished. An original plurality of officers of equal rank gave place to a threefold ministry, with one Bishop, a College of Presbyters, and several Deacons. According to Hatch, a scholar of equal note, the Bishop and Presbyter were at first distinct. Bishops, according to

¹ See note on the Christian Ministry in his *Commentary on the Philippian Epistle*.

him, were found in Gentile Churches only, the name being borrowed from the municipal life of the Greek city. Their office was purely administrative and financial. On the other hand, the Presbyterate was transferred from the synagogue to the Christian church, where, owing to a strong infusion of the Jewish element, it established itself rapidly and with ease. According to Hatch, so far as I can gather, the work of the Presbyter was mainly educative and disciplinary.

Harnack agrees with Hatch as to an original distinction between the two names, but, on further revision of the facts, he carries us a step or two forward. He bases his conclusions on a passage in the *Didachê*,¹ which he describes as of "epoch-making significance." It reads: "Appoint over yourselves Bishops and Deacons, men of the Lord, gentle, free from covetousness, true men and tried; for they also render you service as prophets and teachers. Despise them not, for they are honourable among you, as are prophets and teachers." From that passage Harnack draws a twofold conclusion. (a) Presbyters were men of age and experience as the name denotes, and therefore the natural leaders of a community, but in no sense official persons. They were not so much invested with authority as treated with becoming reverence (*τιμὴ καὶ φόρος*). In this way he explains the absence of any reference to them in the *Didachê*. (b) Bishops were duly elected by the Church to an office which, as Hatch defines it, was administrative and financial. But in virtue of a special charism, to which, doubtless,

¹ Chap. xv. 1 and 2.

they owed their election, they took a leading part in public worship. Accordingly, when the Prophets, who originally presided at the Lord's Table, were discredited and finally disappeared, the Bishops took their place and thus became the representatives of the Church. Presbyters, on the other hand, lost caste and became little other than an advisory committee. Yet Harnack allows that Bishops were naturally chosen from the ranks of the Presbyters, so that, in an informal and somewhat loose way, the names may sometimes have been identified.

What concerns us is that, according to all these scholars, the Pastoral Epistles, which mark the latest stage of ecclesiastical development so far as the New Testament goes, know only of a twofold ministry : bishops (who may also be called Presbyters) and Deacons.¹ It is true that Bishop Ellicott, like some other Anglican divines, asserts that "there are indelible traces in the New Testament of an office which, possibly arising from a simple presidency over the Board of Presbyters, grew, under *apostolic sanction* and by *apostolic institution*, into a single definite rulership over the whole body ecclesiastic." But of this statement he offers no proof save a bare reference to the Angels of the Seven Churches ; and there is little in the modern Episcopate, with all its learning and sanctity, that suggests the mysterious Heptad of the Apocalypse. It is more to the point to notice a reference to those elders "who labour in word and doctrine" ; an enviable class whose emoluments (τιμὴ) increase with the responsibility of their office. On this we may, perhaps, base a plea for the more

¹ See note at the end of this Chapter.

generous endowment of Theological Faculties in our Universities, as distinct from the ordinary Pastorate, or content ourselves with a reference to the distinction still observed among us between the Teaching and Ruling Elders. Either way, we note the freedom of self-development which the Church thus early claimed and exercised.

Behind the Bishop or Elder stands the Deacon, and by his side, the Deaconess. This latter outburst of Christian activity, this recognition of the gentler sex within the Orders of the Church, may explain a reference in 1 Tim. iii. 11, where probably *γυναῖκες* should be rendered "women-workers" instead of "wives." The same qualifications are required of them as of their male colleagues. They must be grave in deportment, restrained in speech and action, faithful in the discharge of duty. Lastly, there are widows; women who, freed from domestic entanglements, gave themselves wholly to Church work. Concerning them the writer, no doubt warned by a sad experience of human frailty, directs that they be not recognized, or enrolled, till they are advanced in years, well beyond the marriageable age, lest they relapse and bring dishonour on their vows.

Thus we see the Church organizing her forces, obedient to a vital impulse still strong within her. And the same process may be traced along other lines. Public worship is regulated; we hear of "Reading, Exhortation, and Doctrine," the three elements in a modern sermon. The Church's faith finds expression in rhythmic utterances or hymns, a kind of composition of which the Te Deum is still the classic example. One

of these early hymns is preserved for us here, and may be quoted :

“ He was manifested in the flesh,
Justified in the Spirit,
Seen of angels ;
He was preached among the Gentiles,
Believed on in the world,
Received up to glory.”

Some idea, too, may be gathered, of the wider outlook of the Church in these later days. She is no longer a Jewish sect, a company of individuals praising God for the gift of a personal salvation ; but already is conscious of her mission to the world. Instead of a neutral, she affects a friendly, relation to the civil powers, and sets herself, in her proper way, to influence and control the course of history. “ I will that prayers be made for kings and all in authority.” That this should have come about by the end of the first century, immediately after a season of bitter persecution, is proof of the remarkable clearness with which the Church thus early conceived her calling.

On the other hand, we see that an age of development was proving itself an age of decline. Men had entered the Church, and even the ministry, who were not in sympathy with the Christian ideal. These teachers, Jewish by birth, “ men of the circumcision,” if they posed as exponents of the Mosaic Law, certainly went far beyond their brief. They forbade to marry, and abstained from meats. Despising the body, they regarded the Resurrection as a purely spiritual transformation, already past. With this ascetic tendency was blended a speculative element, genealogies and

myths, hair-splittings and endless disputations the outcome of which was not to edification. Of these teachers we are told that they crept into men's houses, and led captive silly women and innocent children. From this we may infer that the accusation brought against the Christians by Celsus at a later period, and indignantly repudiated by Origen, had more of truth in it than the great apologist would allow. The evil leaven thus at work produced its natural result in a lower moral tone. The ministry, erewhile the gift of the Spirit, became a profession to which men aspired and which they degraded to their own level. Here the writer, who affects anonymity, is naturally vague in his references ; yet there are passages where you have only to omit the negative, behind which he decently veils the nakedness of the situation as it confronted him, to see what the ministry had become. " Given to wine, brawling, greedy " ; such was the parson of the day—a great diner-out, an excellent judge of wine, lingering over his cups, convivial in his habits, covetous and contentious in spirit. We are reminded of the remark made by Epictetus : " The Vine has three daughters, Pleasure, Excess, and Insolence." Even the women were tainted by the spirit of the age—gadding about, never off the doorstep, wasting in idle gossip time better spent in the care of their children. Thus had the fence been broken down and the Garden of the Lord laid waste.

The danger was even more subtle and insistent than the writer felt it to be ; nor did he himself wholly escape. In the great Pauline Epistles the Church is the Bride of Christ, tender and tearful as becomes one who mourns

an absent Lord. One of them is dated, not from the Roman prison where he wrote, but from "the Heavenly Places" where he sees the Church in rapt communion with her risen Lord. On the other hand, when we turn to the Pastoral Epistles, the Church is the House of God, pillar and foundation of the truth.¹ The figure is striking and stately, but surely significant of the change we have noted. The stream of molten lava has stiffened in the mould, the living organism fossilized into a pile of masonry, no longer sensitive to the warm breath, the living Spirit which yet is the source and only safeguard of the Church's life.

II

We have seen that the Pastoral Epistles, even if not written by St. Paul, contain a Pauline element and tradition. For one thing, they enshrine the memory of a beautiful episode, the friendship between the aged apostle and one whom he always addresses as "mine own son in the faith." In Timothy we see a minister in the making. His early youth was spent within the shelter of a Christian home; from a child he learned the Scriptures.² Then came the crisis of his life, his meeting with St. Paul, followed by the consecration of all his gifts to the service of Jesus Christ. Years of unofficial activity at Paul's side led up to his ordination, that solemn hour when the hands of the Presbytery, laid on his head, set him apart to the holy ministry. We read of "prophecies going before";³ and, whether

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 15.

² 2 Tim. iii. 15.

³ 1 Tim. i. 18.

these utterances were directly inspired or merely the sanguine forecasts of his friends, they indicate that the whole Church participated, by initiation or consent, in the steps which led to his ordination. As the day drew near when Paul must leave Ephesus, the young man's heart was wrung by the pain of parting; tears were shed.¹ Months followed, no doubt burdened by work and shadowed by a sense of responsibility, but brightened again and again by messages from his aged friend; some of which are preserved for us in these Epistles. He reads, marks, and inwardly digests each sentence and phrase:

"Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."²

"Continue thou in the things which thou hast heard of me."³

"Take heed to thyself and to the doctrine."⁴

"Study to show thyself approved, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed."⁵

"Be not ashamed of the Lord, nor of me, His prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God."⁶

There is much more of the same sort, which we may summarize under four heads:

1. Nothing in youth is more beautiful than modesty. Yet there is a danger here. A young minister may easily underrate his own influence and consequent responsibility. Therefore: Let no man despise thy youth.⁷ On the other hand, youth is proverbially

¹ 2 Tim. i. 4.

² *Ibid.* ii. 1.

³ *Ibid.* iii. 14.

⁴ 1 Tim. iv. 16.

⁵ 2 Tim. ii. 15.

⁶ *Ibid.* i. 8.

⁷ 1 Tim. iv. 12.

impulsive and self-confident. Therefore : Lay hands suddenly on no man ;¹ let nothing be done with prejudice or partiality.²

2. A sensitive nature like Timothy's is easily impressed for good or evil by its environment. We have seen the men, his colleagues in office, by whom he was surrounded, and can feel the force of the warning : Be not partaker of other men's sins ;³ flee youthful lusts.⁴ Nor less must he guard against a false spirituality, an austerity which might repel others and must certainly react upon himself. " Every creature God hath created is good, and to be received with thanksgiving of them that know the truth." ⁵

3. Social relations are touched on with great wisdom. A young minister is not indisposed to play the Pope in a country parish, imposing the *ipse dixit* of a Master on humble folk who have yet much to teach him of the things of God. " Rebuke not an old man sharply, but treat him as a father, and the younger men as brothers." ⁶ And what of the other sex ? The writer has no faith in a celibate clergy ; but neither is he blind to a real danger here. There is a world of difference between the courtesy towards all women which marks the gentleman, and that over-freedom, that looseness of manner and speech, which disgraces a minister. It is hard to say how often the influence of a good man has been crippled for life by an unwise attachment into which he has been betrayed in youth. " The elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters," *ἐν πάσῃ ἡγνείᾳ*, i.e. with all knightly deference.⁷

¹ 1 Tim. v. 22.

² *Ibid.* v. 21.

³ *Ibid.* v. 22.

⁴ 2 Tim. ii. 22.

⁵ 1 Tim. iv. 4.

⁶ *Ibid.* v. 1.

⁷ *Ibid.* v. 2.

4. Emphatic are the warnings against covetousness. This concerns us all. Now, as then, a man who enters the ministry turns his back on alluring prospects of an affluence which he might have achieved along some other line ; nor, even if poverty cleave to him as his bride, does he claim our pity. Yet the fact that the sacrifice has been made definitely and after due deliberation, may lend it a fictitious importance in his mind. Thus money may dominate his whole conception of life as effectively and quite as mischievously in its absence as by its presence. The thrifty habits to which he is bound tend to the penurious, and the penurious is next door to the miserly. Let him beware ! It is generally supposed that, when a call comes to a young minister, his first question is about the salary, the manse, the social amenities of the district. Of course we resent the imputation ; but we shall be wiser if we lay it to heart as a reminder of what is a persistent danger. Even a noble intellect, a bright fancy, may be dimmed and enslaved by this most earthly weakness. In no man is covetousness so unlovely as in a minister. Wealth, in other hands the lawful and laudable symbol of success, in his hands degenerates into "filthy lucre." The wise man will decline to face a foe so subtle and deadly, seeking safety rather in flight. "Thou, therefore, O man of God, flee these things."¹ Be as ambitious as you please, but let it be in another and opposite direction. Let your wealth be your good works. Reckon yourself rich only while heart and hand are open, "ready to distribute, willing to communicate."

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 11,

Here are words to be pondered often and long :

“ No man that warreth,” *i.e.* on active service, “ entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” ¹ Lord Bacon says : “ As the baggage to an army, so are riches to virtue. They hinder the march ; yea, and the care of them sometimes loseth or disturbeth the victory.” Of great riches little profit comes, save in the distribution ; the rest is mere conceit.

“ And if a man strive for the mastery, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.” ² Crowns do not ripen like apples, and drop into the hands of those that stand and gape ; nor shall we achieve mastery over others, unless we are first masters of ourselves. To scorn delights and live laborious days is still the secret of success. We must strive, and strive lawfully, *νομιμῶς*, that is, observant of the rules imposed, of which, surely, the first and last is Concentration.

“ The husbandman that laboureth must first be partaker of the fruits.” ³ If a man have land, he reckons that, while Heaven gives sunlight and seed, it is his to water the soil with the sweat of his brow. Even great gifts call for diligent cultivation. Therefore : Stir up the gift that is in thee.⁴ It is a simple strenuous life to which we are called. Bodily exercise is not without profit.⁵ A man may be a better parson, because he has won his college “ blue.” The writer would have approved of George Pilkington, who cycled from the coast up to Uganda, arriving five weeks before the scheduled time,

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 4.

² *Ibid.* ii. 5.

³ *Ibid.* v. 6.

⁴ 2 Tim. i. 6.

⁵ *Ibid.* iv. 8.

and settled down next morning in perfect physical condition to resume his work as a translator. But mind and heart must have precedence : Godliness is profitable unto all things.

Such is the conception of the ministry here unfolded. It may seem disappointing ; less intimate and tender than the pastoral tie as conceived by St. Peter. But in an age when formalism on the one hand, and fanaticism on the other, betray the decline of spirituality, there is need of a vigorous life ; we must cultivate habits of abstinence and self-restraint. The Athletic Ideal must come to its own. Nor is there any real conflict here. He is no true shepherd who is not ready on occasion, like young David, to play the warrior. " Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear ; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be even as they." ¹ In his essay on Friendship, Emerson says : " He who offers himself as a candidate for this covenant, comes up like an Olympian to the great games where the first-born of the world are competitors. He proposes himself for a contest where Time, Want, and Danger are in the lists, and he alone is victor who has truth enough in his composition to preserve the delicacy of his beauty from the wear and tear of all these." If that is true of ordinary Friendship, it is still more true of the closer tie that binds together a Pastor and his people. It is no easy task to preserve the purity and refinement of feeling with which you start on your ministerial work. It is not here the province of any to command, yet it is in the power of all to deserve, success. We are told of one who

¹ 1 Sam. xvii. 36.

was crowned at the Olympian Games, that, as he entered the lists, he turned to the colossal statue of Jupiter which overlooked the arena, and prayed thus: "O Zeus, if all the requisite preparations have been made by me, come now and give me victory, as is due." It is in that spirit of high-souled confidence and humble dependence you must begin and carry through your work.

"Fight the good fight" (τὸν καλὸν ἀγῶνα).¹ The words are not an unfair rendering of the original; yet something has been lost in the process of translation. The foreground of the picture is there; the young athlete, man or minister, stripped to the waist, his eye already on the goal. But what of the background? The Agôn was not first of all a contest. It was an Assemblage, drawn together from all parts of the Greek world by one of those National Festivals of which the games were only an episode. We picture the crowds pouring into the stadium, filling the benches, tier above tier, a sea of faces swept by sudden gusts of emotion, now darkened by suspense, and again lighted up with recognition. That is the background of which you must never lose sight. Obscure as work may be in many a country parish, a concourse, not less vast or august, witness your toils and share your triumphs. "This is the true athlete, who in the great stadium of the fair world is crowned with victory. He who proposes the contest is the Almighty; He who awards the prize is His only-begotten Son. Angels and Gods are spectators. The contest is not with flesh and blood but with spiritual powers. He who

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 2.

obtains the mastery here and overthrows the tempter, obtains the crown of life." ¹

NOTE ON THE BISHOP OR PRESBYTER

Harnack supports his view only by a somewhat free-and-easy handling of the New Testament writings which he regards not as "authorities," but simply as documents to be either rejected or re-arranged according to a theory that is based on extra-Biblical evidence. Thus he rejects those passages in the Book of Acts where the ordination of presbyters is recorded, and treats the relevant passages in the Pastoral Epistles as of a comparatively late date.

A different construction of the facts is given by Professor Loening of Halle. From an interesting appendix to Principal Lindsay's work on the Christian Ministry, I gather that, according to Loening, there were originally no office-bearers in the Church. The first sign of organization is found by him in what he regards as the latest genuine epistle of St. Paul, viz., that to the Philippians, in which he salutes the bishops and deacons, using these names intentionally to indicate an open breach with the Jewish Church. Loening is inclined to free the Episcopate of the narrow limits Hatch imposes on its activities, and to identify it in a more generous way with the many-sided life of the Church. Presbyters, he believes, were introduced at a later period, and brought with them the characteristically Jewish rite of ordination into the

¹ Clement of Alexandria.

Christian Church where, at least for a time, they were identified with the bishops.

Deissmann, on the other hand, emphasizes the fact that the word presbyter was in common use in the great municipalities of Asia Minor ; and that the affairs of the Egyptian priesthood were regulated by an assembly whose members, twenty-five in number, were known as presbyters.

CHAPTER IV

THE MASTER AS MINISTER

JESUS is our Master ; we bow before Him with a reverence that disarms criticism, absolute because unconstrained. Yet He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. In the work that lies before you, He is your great example; a study of His method and manner must be the business of your lives.

Here, at the outset, a critical question confronts us. We have four records of our Lord's life and work : the three Synoptics, and one Gospel which stands alone. The Synoptic problem we may leave to Oxford students. However the three Evangelists may differ in detail, in broad outline they agree ; and it is outline rather than detail that concerns us. Even the presence of an apocalyptic element, probably of later origin, in longer or shorter form, need not affect us ; the drift and tendency, the aim and spirit of our Lord's teaching can scarcely be said to be modified by it. It is otherwise when we face the Fourth Gospel. Is it a philosophic treatise, or a religious romance, or in any sense a history ? The answer we give to that question must undoubtedly modify our conception not of Jesus only but of the Christian ministry. The Fourth Gospel differs so greatly from the Synoptics, not in form only but in substance ; it is so

largely pervaded by the reflective and subjective ; it bears so many marks of later modes of thought, that the question of its date and origin will always be one of delicacy. I am not a New Testament scholar, and have no desire to make pronouncements which could have little value. But I test a writing as I test a picture, by the impression it makes. Now the note of the Fourth Gospel is that of absolute sincerity. The author is dominated by a theme which baffles his powers of comprehension as well as expression ; and the impression he produces is not only life-like but life-giving. Take those great chapters which record the teaching of the Upper Room, and place alongside of them Plato's *Phædo*, the only thing in literature which resembles them. How great is the difference ! The gospel narrative is noble in its simplicity ; it is the unveiling of a Divine mystery which transcends the statement of it as a sunset transcends the artist's colours which vainly seek to portray it. As you turn the pages, you are not reading about Jesus ; He is speaking to you. The psychological conditions under which, at the close of the first century, an old well was reopened and a fading memory reclothed in flesh and blood, easily elude us, but there can be little doubt that in substance, if not in form, the narrative is historic. So much for the materials on which we have to draw.

I

The one glimpse we have of the boyhood of Jesus we owe to St. Luke. We see Him in the Temple among the Doctors, asking and answering questions. There is

nothing exaggerated or precocious in the picture ; it breathes the spirit of a healthy-minded inquiring boy. Yet how suggestive are those words : “ Wist ye not that I must be about My Father’s business ? (ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς μου) ? ” Religion, the spiritual sphere, was His element from the first. The fruitful ministry of later years strikes root deep in that eager docile youth. And because He never knew a moment of painful hesitation, never had any ambition but the one, therefore He could say, when His life was ending, “ I have finished the work that Thou gavest Me to do.” Years follow, spent in the quiet home at Nazareth ; not wasted years, for they brought Him that deep experience and patient strength which come only with waiting. “ Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille ” ;¹ it was so with our Lord, and we must learn the lesson. Too few and fugitive are the happy days of youth when the mystery of life broods over us, and the spirit has its one chance to unfold into a symmetry of finely balanced powers. Undue pressure and over-haste spoil many a promising career. Guard against the temptation to preach before your message has matured.

With His baptism, we reach a crisis in our Lord’s life. Great things were happening. After four centuries of silence, the voice of God was heard again. A prophet had arisen, and all Jerusalem and Judea went out to hear Him. There is no doubt that Jesus was deeply impressed by the new movement ; it drew Him from His retirement. Yet He stood aloof from it. We see Him on the outskirts of the crowd, a sympathetic

¹ Goethe’s *Tasso*.

spectator, in no sense a product of the movement. Some men in their youth are caught by the flow of a religious revival. In a generous enthusiasm they dedicate themselves to the ministry, and live to see the tide that swept them off their feet ebb away, leaving them committed to a task for which they have no personal fitness. It was not so with our Lord. As He prayed, Heaven opened and the Spirit like a dove rested upon Him. The inwardness and the completeness of His consecration were the pledge of its persistence.

I do not need to protest against the crude and superficial view of our Lord's Temptation which regards it as an isolated event, and dwells with morbid interest on the weird and supernatural elements in the story. Against that error, the Evangelists themselves warn us when they say : "The Devil leaveth Him for a season." What we have here is a single penetrative glimpse into an experience which was lifelong. Every man who enters on a great task as Jesus did, must define his aims, select his methods, and recognize the conditions under which he is to work. Is he to appeal to appetite in men, turning stones into bread to feed them, or to waken in them aspirations after the word of God by which alone they live? Are his methods to be ostentatious and sensational; is he at liberty to pose, or must he rely on the slow subduing power of Truth? Is there any place for compromise? Can he serve God and Mammon, win the world and save his soul, be true to the ideals that crowned his youth, and yet escape the cross? I dwell on these points, familiar as they are, because I know how soon every one of you will have to face the

desert and make his lonely choice, herding with beasts or communing with angels, as he makes it ill or well.

So much of our Lord's preparation for His work.

II

Among the characteristics of our Lord's ministry, I select the following for notice :

(a) First of all, there is the breadth of His sympathies. He was born a Jew, and loyally observed the limits imposed on Him ; yet He never lost sight of the wider aspects of His mission. This is clearly brought out in His reception of those Greeks who came to Jerusalem to the Feast. They belonged to that gifted race which has made the world its debtor. Love of travel, or perhaps business, had brought them there. Greeks were the traders of the day and went far to push their wares or get wind of a new market. In the gossip of the street they had heard of Jesus, and, true to their rôle as "pickers up of learning's crumbs," they determined not to go home till they had added this morsel to their store. That was all that actually happened, yet the Master was strangely moved. He saw in these men the first-fruits of a world-harvest He was yet to reap. In their simple request : "We would see Jesus," He hears His summons to the cross. Notice how He speaks over their heads, addressing Himself to ages yet unborn, and to us : "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me."

(b) There is the variety of His methods. Here there is nothing rigid or conventional. He is out to get

work done ; where, how, or by what means, He cares not. If men will not come to Him, He will go to them. If He cannot reach them in the mass, He will take them one by one. If they have no spiritual instincts, at least they are weary and hungry, they have sad hearts which have need of healing, and social wrongs which call for righting, and He is there to help. Like a skilful angler, He baits His hook, having regard both to the water and the weather in which He is to fish. The bane of the ministry to-day is its conventionality. Two regular services on Sunday, a week-day lecture, and so many hours of pastoral visitation ; that is our task. If men come to us, it is well ; if not, there's an end of it ! Nay, says the Master, there is only the beginning of it—the beginning of a problem that will never be solved without imagination and ingenuity. Somehow, we must get out of the rut. We must be all things to all men, to win even one.

(c) There is the simplicity of His aim. He was a soul-winner. It has been said of Him that He discovered the soul ; and in a sense that is true. Hitherto Jehovah had been worshipped as King in Israel, lost amid the lonely splendours of an eternal throne. But for Jesus, the personal element was uppermost in religion. God was His Father ; and every man He met, bearing God's image, is hailed in the Father's name. There was no shallow optimism in His Gospel. Again and again He speaks of men as "lost," a phrase the nakedness of which suggests not only the height from which they have fallen but the depths of sin and shame in which they are settling down. But they may be saved, and He is

there to save them. He goes up and down, looking them full in the face, searching the depths that slumbered in their hearts. The thought of one true penitent, of a soul saved, fills Him with untold gladness. And, no doubt, the simplicity of His aim was the measure of His success. The woman at the well left her pitcher ; the publican disbursed his ill-gotten gains ; the rich young ruler kindled into an unwonted enthusiasm ; the lawyer ceased to fence ; the aged rabbi softened into a child, inquiring and receptive. We too must be soul-winners. Nothing else will sustain the effort of a lifetime. One of my early friends has left on record this remark : " I think I should be cured of the disease of unsatisfied desire, if I could see a few souls led by me to Christ." ¹ We all know the disease ; let us prove the remedy to the full.

(d) Perhaps most of all we notice the intensity of His spirit. He flings Himself into the work. His disciples brought Him bread to eat, but He had meat to eat they knew not of. Considerations of health and safety are ruled aside as irrelevant. The guiding star of His life, the light of all His seeing, is the thought of a duty to be done. " If a man walk in the day he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of the world." He had compassion on the multitude ; He wept over the city ; He set His face as a flint to go to Jerusalem. There was nothing professional about Him ; He was never off duty. John Foster, writing of Howard the philanthropist, finds in him " the calmness of an intensity kept uniform by the nature of the human mind

¹ Rev. R. W. Barbour.

forbidding it to be more, and the character of the man forbidding it to be less." It was so with Jesus: man could not more, He would not less. Here surely we have need to learn of Him. One had better go elsewhere, breaking stones or patching shoes, than enter the ministry with any reserve, any thought of ease or comfort. He who will win souls must give his own, a ransom for them.

(e) Is the picture overdrawn? Does it suggest something strained and artificial? Then, let me correct the impression. No one ever had a keener enjoyment of beauty than our Lord. There were hours when His placid spirit seemed a mirror held up to nature. The scent of the flowers and the song of the birds lent a charm to His style; you can trace the process of the seasons in the growth of His thought. He had a genius for friendship, and some of His best work was done in the unrestrained freedom of social life. Joy was always one note of His ministry; at the last, in the Upper Room, it was supreme. "These things have I spoken unto you that My joy may remain in you."

So much for His methods.

III

To appreciate Jesus adequately as a Preacher, we must understand what religion had become, how stifling the air of the synagogue, how endless and arid the subtleties dealt out by the scribes, vacant chaff well meant for grain, stones for bread. From all that, Jesus broke away. I admit that it is difficult to represent

Him under this aspect. The so-called " Sermon on the Mount " was never spoken by Him, at least as it stands. It is an artificial combination of Logia, many of which may be traced back to their original context—often widely apart. I suppose Jesus never spoke for half an hour on end. The formal introduction, the stately peroration, and all the technique of the orator, were unknown to Him. Spontaneity and simplicity marked His every utterance. His expositions of Scripture, marvels of insight, are mere suggestions flung out. He had a wonderful way of putting new content into worn-out words and phrases. Thus, on His lips, " Truth " is no mere verbal accuracy or logical consistency, or even historic continuity ; it stands for Reality. And because He brought men face to face with Reality, life and death, God, judgment, and themselves, therefore men listened to Him. Our preaching is often false because, while faultlessly orthodox, it is out of touch with Reality.

It must have been a great experience to hear Jesus preach. He never advertised Himself ; He had indeed no need to do so. Where He went, the crowd followed Him. Every man who heard Him once, determined to hear Him again, and took a friend with him. Thus His audience grew. Men gave up a day's wage, boys a half-holiday ; women travelled many miles, footing it lightly over the hillside, to hear the great Preacher. As a rule, He preached in the open air, His pulpit a mossy boulder or a boat. He had a welcome for all, and the children were soon nestling about Him, one at least in His arms. Of the service, it is as hard to say when it began as when

it ended. We glide into it. A question is put ; the answer, purposely enigmatic, calls for further explanation, and soon we are swept away on a stream of easy informal talk. Interruptions are sure to follow ; a comment or a protest from some one in the crowd, and the stream of talk is diverted into another channel. If He sought a text, He found it in a wayside flower, holding it up in sheer joy of its beauty ; while the fields were a handbook of homely illustration. He was never abstract or recondite ; never lacking in sympathy with the needs of daily life. Now it was a pithy proverb flung at them, now a striking figure, a quaint story, or a tender appeal. Highest truths in humblest guise, beautiful thoughts breathed in tones that must have been musical and penetrating, carried conviction to His hearers. Again and again the central idea in His mind comes to the front : Your Father, He knows, He cares for you. Sometimes a smile, like a wave of light, ripples over the weather-beaten faces gathered round ; as often, a tear courses slowly down. So, with intervals for refreshment, the hours pass swiftly, and they disperse, reminiscent and reflective. Surely never man spake like this man !

I do not suppose that Jesus ever wrote a sermon ; neither need you, if your whole life is a preparation, as His was, for the work. You may go to the pulpit on Sunday without a scrap of paper, uncertain even of your text, if you have spent Saturday morning in prayer and the afternoon and evening in visitation of the sick. Yet we claim the utmost freedom in dealing with our Model. The Master never imposes His methods on the disciple.

You may wear your hood, intone your prayers, and read your sermon from a neatly folded manuscript. None of these bad habits will forbid success if only there is something else behind them than an empty grimacing mask. It was as the Son of Man Jesus spoke to men ; and what they found in Him was the tender grace of a human sympathy. Years spent in the study of Divinity will not make preachers of you, if you are lacking in honest, hearty manhood.

I know that Jesus was the Son of God. There can be no comparison between Him and us, magnitudes so diverse. But remember His words : “ The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach.” That Spirit in its fulness we too may have. True preaching, I find, is Theanthropic work : the Eternal Logos clothing itself afresh in the thought and speech of a man. Nor do I know how you may hope more vividly to realize the mystery of the Incarnation than when, possessed by a message that is not your own, you speak God’s truth in God’s name to your fellow-men. Of great preachers it has been said that the pulpit was their throne ; of many more who make no pretence to be great, it might be said that, as they stood there by His side, they were transfigured with Him.

IV

As a Teacher, Jesus was remarkable for His breadth of view and the conciliatory spirit in which He dealt with His opponents. He disarmed error, not by criticism, but by the presentation of positive truth. Let me take

an example. On one occasion He was asked, probably by a disciple of the Baptist : " Why do not Thy disciples fast ? " His reply is a counter-question : " Can the children of the bride-chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them ? " Behind these words, a thinly-veiled defence of Himself and His disciples, there lies a thought novel to His age and, as we can now see, revolutionary in its tendency. Religious forms derive their sanction from their utility ; and, as the relation between Him and His disciples was one of pure grace and therefore of gladness, fasting would have been out of place. To support this position, two short parables are introduced. Here is an old coat ; what is to be done with it ? Thrifty mother, stitching the worn-out garment with aching fingers, adding here and there a patch of unfulled cloth on which she has spent her savings ; does she not waste her time and strength, both pains and pence ? With rain and sunshine, the new is sure to shrink, " taking from the old " and leaving the rent worse than before. Let her bide her time, till she have the price of a new garment. Here again is new wine to be bottled ; and here are bottles, skins that have felt the pressure of many a vintage. Fill them, these tough, well-seasoned skins, with the new wine still stirring and fermenting. What is the result ? Bottles burst, wine spilt. Fresh skins with moisture in them, capable of expansion, obedient to the pressure from within, might have saved the good wine, and themselves. So it is with Religion. That which is new, not yet grown rigid through time, new and therefore, like new wine, full of ferment and irrepressible young life, agrees not with the conventional and old.

Forms there must be, but forms that correspond to the spirit. Creeds must be vital with conviction ; otherwise Religion is a mere patchwork, incoherent and grotesque. All this is simple and to the point. Jesus is the first of Radicals, conscious of a breach between Himself and those with whom He reasons, and unwilling to attempt a compromise. It is perilous to ignore facts, to gloss over differences which go to the roots of things.

But now, what follows ? “ No man, having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new ; for he saith, The old is better.” The emphasis here rests on the second clause, and on the word “ straightway.” It is an important qualification of what has gone before ; a plea urged by our Lord Himself in the interest of those who differ from Him. “ Do not,” He says, “ expect too much of men. Give them time ; time which heals so many a breach and tones down so many a glaring contrast. If a man’s tastes are formed and his habits fixed, if he has taken root in some old world of thought and feeling, it must always be difficult to dislodge him. Insistence begets resistance. What is needed is consideration, sympathy, patience. Insinuate a point ; hold up the new till the sense of novelty has worn off and it blends insensibly with the old.” And here we have the Great Teacher, radical in principle but wisely conservative in His method.

A frank acceptance of this method in the first century enabled the Church to hold together and, in the end, to disentangle herself from the Jewish element that threatened to rend her. The same method, if applied during the Puritan period, might have spared us many a

barren controversy and preserved a richer heritage and an undivided front for the Protestant Church. In our own day, a wise forbearance such as our Lord inculcates is greatly needed. Some men are all for change ; others are all against it. Some cling to every fragment of a form that bears the brand of a bygone century. Others are intolerant of everything that does not smell of paint. Critical questions, new schools of thought, threaten to divide the Church. Now it is vain to imprison the spirit of to-day in the forms of yesterday ; we must outgrow ourselves. On the other hand, we must do justice to an instinct that prompts men to prefer an ivy-mantled ruin through which the wind whistles and the rain beats, just because it is old, to the solid comfort and sanitation of a modern mansion. Why should we press *à l'outrance* the conflict which is largely one of temperament and time ? We who are in the van to-day may find ourselves the rearguard of to-morrow, blinded by the dust of farther progress, suing for tolerance from those who, in their turn, have outstripped us. New and old are relative terms ; Truth alone is absolute and eternal. It is the wisdom of the Church to welcome the new in the name of the old, as a witness to the vitality of a faith which is ever re-creating the forms in which she dwells with men.

V

Let me recall to your mind Holman Hunt's famous picture—"The Shadow of the Cross." It represents the interior of a carpenter's shop as you might have seen it eighteen centuries ago in Nazareth, where things do

not change as in our stirring West. The rude bench is there, the tools, the pile of fragrant wood. The central figure is that of our Lord in His youthful prime, stripped to the waist for toil. For a moment He stands at ease, and the sunlight, pouring through the doorway, casts the shadow of His upright form and outstretched arms, the dark and fateful shadow of a cross, upon the floor. There is more in the picture than the realism of a Pre-Raphaelite ; there is the poetry of deep spiritual truth. Every great event casts its shadow before it. But in one respect the artist's conception must be amended. In the picture, the shadow falls behind the Christ, seen only by the kneeling mother. As a matter of fact, none knew so well as He did, none saw so clearly and felt so keenly, what lay before Him. On none did the shadow of the cross rest as on Him.

There is a school of New Testament critics, according to whom the cross was an unfortunate incident and no more. Endowed with the highest gifts of mind and heart, with an eye as clear and bright as the Galilean lake when it sparkles in the morning sunlight, Jesus, we are told, began life with no idea of the awful tragedy which awaited Him. In His quiet home He spoke to men of the great ideas among which He dwelt : God, eternity, and the soul. Thus He found His power ; His fame filled the land, so that at last the Capital demanded His presence. There all was changed. Instead of uttering brief parables that fell like gems from His lips, charming His hearers by their simple beauty, He found Himself involved in prolonged and doubtful controversy, crossing swords with the trained intellects

of the schools for whom He was no match. To maintain His waning popularity, He posed as a miracle worker, and later, as the Messiah. After that, there could be only one issue. Unable honourably to withdraw or practically to substantiate His claim, He travelled onward into deepening gloom, and expiated His rashness on the cross. On this construction of the story, the best, the kindest thing we can do is to draw a veil over those dark days, concerning ourselves only with Jesus of Galilee, the practical Reformer, the persuasive Teacher, the beautiful Enthusiast.

But we cannot help noting that the last thing the Evangelists dream of doing is to ignore the cross. Everything they have to say leads up to that. Still more, we note that our Lord, if not from the first, yet very early in His ministry, anticipates its issue. Such, at least, is the common Synoptic tradition. "He began to say unto His disciples, how the Son of Man must go up to Jerusalem and suffer many things." I do not insist on the harrowing details, drawn out possibly by some later hand. But I cannot ignore the quiet persistence with which, putting aside the well-meant remonstrance of His friends, He presses home the central fact, and holds up before them the cross as His goal. Some weeks later, when one who loved Him well and sought to honour Him had poured over Him a costly ointment, it was the talk of the table. Some were offended by an act that seemed to defraud the poor; others may have excused it as a pardonable extravagance of friendship. Jesus said: "For my burial hath she done this." Finally, on the night of His betrayal,

He converts a friendly meal into a memorial service and pours out His heart in a pathetic monologue, as on the eve of a long separation. Dark was the night as they wended their way to the garden ; darker still the shadow into which His spirit moved. Next day He died. Have I made it as plain to you as it was to His disciples, simple men who had no theory to maintain, that our Lord lived under the shadow of the cross ? However it may have been with others, to Him it came as no surprise, but as the bridal morning to the bride whom it finds trembling yet ready. Thus went He forth to wed with death.

“ If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me.” Paul too had his stigmata, and St. Francis, and Catherine of Siena. Was there ever a faithful minister of Christ who could not say : “ I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus ” ? It is with bleeding feet and heart burdened sometimes to the breaking-point that we must follow Him in the way. Yet there is no work that brings so rich a reward. “ If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign.” At the foot of the Cross, within its quiet shadow, you will find a spot from which the healing waters flow. “ To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life that is in the midst of the paradise of God.”

CHAPTER V

“CONCERNING HOLY ORDERS”

HITHERTO we have taken for granted that the ministry to which you aspire may be described as the Christian Ministry; *i.e.* we have assumed the validity of what are known as “Presbyterian Orders.” That the assumption is challenged does not, of course, shake our faith in it; but it imposes on us the duty of revision and defence. This is our present task.

“Let it be supposed,” says Bishop Gore, in *The Church and the Ministry*, “that Christ, in founding His Church, founded also a ministry in the Church in the person of His apostles. These apostles must be supposed to have had a temporary function in their capacity as founders under Christ. In this capacity they held an office not in its nature perpetual, as Witnesses of the Resurrection. But underlying this was another, a pastorate of souls, a stewardship of the Divine Mysteries. This was meant to be perpetual, by being transmitted from its first depositories. It was, therefore, intended that there should be in every church, and in each generation, an authoritative stewardship of grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ, and a recognized power to transmit it by apostolic descent.” Here is the point at issue; the assumption of a threefold

ministry, and the claim on the part of a particular class to an exclusive right to ordain and to transmit the sacramental grace which brings salvation.

Bishop Gore does his utmost, as a Christian man should do, to conciliate his opponents. He is willing to concede many important points. (a) The form in which this power may be transmitted is to him of no great importance. He is not bound to what he calls "Monepiscopacy"; he would indeed accept Presbyterian Orders, if it could be proved that they possess the sanction and the authority for which he pleads. (b) He admits that faith is essential to salvation, and, in this respect, he is thoroughly evangelical. "As when Christ on earth was healing sick men, the virtue which went out of Him could be liberated so as to act only on those who had faith to be healed, and thus men's faith made them whole, though the healing came from Christ's body; so with His sacraments and all spiritual agencies. He saves in virtue of an inward faith, though by the instrumentality of a gift given from without." (c) He admits the priesthood of all believers and quotes with appreciation statements to this effect from several of the Fathers. But he draws a distinction which is, for him, essential. The reception of Eucharistic Grace and the approach to God in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, are functions of the whole body. But the ministry is the organ by which these functions are discharged; it is the hand which offers and distributes; it is the voice which consecrates and pleads. And the whole body, *i.e.* the Church, can no more dispense with its services than the natural body can speak or grasp without the instrumentality of lip or

hand. (*d*) He is prepared for the introduction of a largely democratic element into our Church life, *i.e.* the popular election of bishops.

These points are ceded ; but only to make more manifest the gulf that divides us. Whatever her forms of government may be, however evangelical her note, however democratic her spirit, the Church must still appeal to an Apostolic Succession in unbroken line. Failing of this, she has no claim to call herself the Church of Christ, no power to minister the grace of God to men's souls. With manifest reluctance, he draws what is for him the inevitable conclusion. “ It will appear at once, as the consequence of all this argument, that the various Presbyterian and Congregational organizations, however venerable on many and different grounds, have, in dispensing with Episcopal Succession, violated a fundamental law of the Church's life. It follows therefore, not that the grace of God has not worked, and worked largely, through many when it was used in good faith, but that a ministry not episcopally received is invalid, *i.e.* falls outside the conditions of covenanted security, and cannot justify itself in terms of the covenant.” Such is our doom ; and the quiet sorrowful tone in which it is pronounced makes it doubly impressive.

Now it is, of course, admitted that, at an early period forces were at work, a movement began within the Church, which led her in time to formulate the position which Bishop Gore now holds. It was natural, even in the Apostolic Church, that, by virtue of peculiar gifts and graces, some one member of a presbytery should achieve pre-eminence over his fellows. As the leader of public

worship, the dispenser of charity, the exponent of the faith, and as representing the Church to those who were outside, such a man counted for much. By the middle of the second century, Episcopacy was an established fact. It was equally natural, though not equally defensible, that an attempt should be made, somewhat later, to justify such supremacy on theological grounds. Hence the appeal to the Old Testament Hierarchy which became common, and the gradual evolution of a sacramental doctrine which is to-day the sole surviving support of the system which gave it birth. As early as 150 A.D. Hippolytus and Calixtus hint at the sacerdotal character of the ministry, though in opposite interests; Cyprian enunciates it in his epistles; the Council of Trent formulates it as an article of the Christian Faith. All this is granted; but it falls far short of the claim made by Bishop Gore that, from the first, Apostolic Succession was held to be essential to the existence of the Christian ministry, and that it is part of the original equipment of the Church as outlined in the New Testament. The more carefully we sift the argument, the more doubtful it becomes. The evidence grows less and less as we move backwards, and wholly disappears when we plant foot on the *terra firma* of the New Testament.

Let us begin with the Gospels. Our Lord committed to St. Peter the keys of the Kingdom: "What thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven"¹ But, as if to guard the words against a purely personal reference, He repeats them,² addressing Himself not to Peter only but to all the disciples. He inculcates on them the grace

¹ Matt. xvi. 18, 19.

² Matt. xvii. 1-18.

of humility, and the duty of forgiveness, adding : “ Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.” And again, under circumstances of peculiar solemnity, addressing Himself now not to the disciples only but to the Church,¹ we read that “ He breathed on them and said : ‘ Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.’ ” No doubt, Bishop Gore protests that this power of absolution, in other words the priesthood, thus conferred, while it resides in the Church as a whole, is to be exercised only by men apostolically qualified for the work. But that interpretation, if accepted, would carry us much farther than even he would wish. When it can be argued that humility, while a Christian grace, is to be practised,—that forgiveness, while a Christian duty, is to be discharged,—that the Holy Ghost, while the gift of Christ, is to be received,—not by all but by a particular class ; then, but not till then, can it be inferred that the priesthood, associated with these, is to be exercised only by the ministry.

When we pass to the Book of Acts we find that the first great controversy in the Church turned on the very point with which we are now dealing. The whole question of Church Orders was raised when the apostolic authority of St. Paul was challenged. That he resented the challenge is manifest ; how then did he meet it ? It is certainly remarkable that in Acts xiii. we read of him as accepting ordination at the hands of the prophets and elders in the Church at Antioch. This indicates the view he took of ordination. He welcomed it gladly as giving him an ecclesiastical sanction, a certain standing

¹ Cf. Luke xxiv. 33 and John xx. 21-23.

in those Jewish Churches he sought to influence. No doubt, too, he prized it as a means of grace to himself. But he never dreams of tracing to it the right he both claimed and exercised to preach Christ, to administer the sacraments, and to ordain elders in the Churches. Everywhere he maintains that he received his ministry not from man or by man, but of the Lord. Nor can it be urged that there were exceptional circumstances in his case, which rendered him independent of Ecclesiastical recognition. While the miraculous element in his call figures largely in the Book of Acts, he himself in his Epistles lays stress exclusively on his spiritual experience, the revelation of Jesus Christ in him.¹ That was his title, as it is still the title of any humble Christian to assume the priesthood. And no doubt what we read of Paul's personal experience must direct us in our interpretation of his ministerial action, as in the case of Timothy and Titus whom he commissions to ordain elders in the Churches. Two points are brought out here. First, in the case of Timothy there were "prophecies going before," which marked him out for office, and in the case of Titus we may assume the same. Ordination by the Church follows and recognizes the prior and authoritative call of God. Nor does Paul ordain of himself. While he recalls with pleasure the active and no doubt prominent part he took in the ordination of Timothy, he reminds him that ordination was no personal affair between them, but an ecclesiastical act in which the whole Church took part through her representatives: "The laying on of the hands of the presbytery."² So far we have seen no reason to

¹ Gal. i. 15, 16.

² 1 Tim. iv. 14.

abandon the presbyterian usage ; nor could any later development of Church practice shake our conviction that in it we have the mind of Christ and follow in the footsteps of His apostles.

A rapid survey of the teaching of the Church in the early ages will confirm us in this view.

Let me remind you that Clement, first Bishop (so-called) of Rome, in his letter to the Corinthian Church, rebukes them for the haste with which they acted in deposing some of their elders. He bases his rebuke on the assumption, no doubt well founded, that these had been good and faithful men.¹ He does not once question the right inherent in the Church to depose when reason can be shown. But manifestly the Church cannot resume what it did not originally confer ; the right to depose implies the right to ordain. In the *Didachê* we have the picture of a Church in the first half of the second century which in three important points—the discharge of discipline, the election of officers, and the celebration of the Eucharist—is distinctly Presbyterian in its polity. The same is true of the Apostolic Canons, dating, according to Harnack, from a later period.² And it is interesting to find that even at the close of the third century in the Alexandrine Church, the election of a bishop rested with the presbyters who, apparently without any act of consecration, conducted him to his seat of office and enthroned him there.³ This custom, recognized, though

¹ 1 Clement, ch. 44.

² Between 140 and 180 A. D.

³ “ Quomodo si exercitus imperatorem faciat ” (Jerome, Ep. 146). The testimony of the Patriarch Eutychius, in the same direction, is later and therefore more doubtful. (See Gore, *On the Ministry*.)

not approved, by later ecclesiastical authorities, is an evident survival of that older Presbyterian custom which we have met in the Didachê and in Clement.

When we consult the early Fathers, we find that while the authority of the Episcopate is steadily growing, it is still innocent of the sacerdotal note which commends it to Bishop Gore. To Ignatius, that passionate soul, passing like a flame of fire among the Churches, the Episcopate is a symbol of the ideal unity in which the Church stands with her Lord. He claims the authority of a prophet rather than that of an historian, and protests against the crude literalism which sought to interpret his words of any actual situation.¹ Nor does he claim for the bishop any exclusive authority, but associates him with the elders and deacons, claiming for them, and indeed for every member of the Church, that deference which was accorded to him. "Obey the Bishop and the Presbytery without distraction of mind." "Be obedient to the Bishop and to one another as Jesus Christ was to the Father." "There is no indication that he upholds the Episcopal *versus* any other form of Church Government, as, *e.g.*, the Presbyterian. The alternative he contemplates is lawless isolation and self-will."²

Irenæus, on the other hand, exalts the Episcopate as the guardian of tradition. The bishop sits in the apostle's seat and witnesses to the continuity and antiquity of the Christian Faith. Apostolic Succession was a fact of the utmost importance in an age when historical criticism was unknown; but it had as yet

¹ *To the Philadelphians*, ch. vii.

² Reville; see Lindsay, *On the Christian Ministry*, p. 194.

no theological significance. The Montanist movement, that “ great conservative revolt of the second century,” was a protest against a dogmatic bias already beginning to be felt, and destined to pervert the whole development of the Church. Tertullian is so far from holding Apostolic Succession in Gore’s sense of the phrase, that he denies any essential distinction between clergy and laity. “ Vain shall we be, if we think that what is not lawful for priests is lawful for the laity. Are not even we laymen priests ? It is the authority of the Church which makes the difference. Thus, where there is no bench of clergy, you offer, baptize, and are priest alone for yourself. Nay, where there are three believers, there is a Church, though they be laymen.”¹ Jerome, too, holds that, even in his day bishops and presbyters are in essence one. “ *Idem est ergo Presbyter qui Episcopus.*” It is “ *ecclesiæ consuetudine,*” and “ to oppose faction,” that the distinction has arisen. It is in his subjective treatment of these high authorities that Bishop Gore displays his weakness as an historian. The *Didachê* is rejected as “ a document of ambiguous theological character.” Tertullian is dismissed as “ representing tendencies subversive of the Church ” ; while Jerome, when he crosses the bishop’s path, is brushed aside as a fretful child, “ writing in a temper.” This is not to let words speak for themselves, but to play on them a tune already sounding through one’s own head.

Perhaps most of all instructive, as indicating the mind of the Church in the end of the second century on this great question, is the witness of Clement of Alex-

¹ See Gore, p. 205.

andria. He is full of reverence for Orders already venerable in his day ; he sees in them an earthly reflection of the Hierarchy of Heaven. But how truly evangelical was his view, how far apart from a narrow and priestly interpretation of Orders, we learn from the following : “ Those who have exercised themselves in the Lord’s commandments and have lived perfectly and with knowledge according to the Gospel, *i.e.* the true Gnostic, may be enrolled in the chosen body of the apostles. Such a one is really a presbyter of the Church and a true deacon of the will of God, if he do and teach the things of the Lord, not being ordained by man nor reckoned as just because he is a presbyter, but counted in the Presbyterate because he is just. And even if here on earth he is not honoured with a chief seat, he will sit on the twenty-four thrones, judging the people, as St. John has said.” ¹

I think I have made it plain that, however much of consent and authority in the Mediæval Church may be claimed in favour of that view of the ministry for which Bishop Gore stands, it has no claim to be originally, continuously, and universally the view of the Catholic Church ; nor has it any authority or sanction from the New Testament.

Having thus cleared the ground by a brief historical review, let us endeavour to lay down those positive principles which underlie an Evangelical theory of the Church and her Orders.

1. We start then from Christ, the only Mediator between God and man, the High Priest of His people, whose passion is the one great atoning sacrifice which

¹ *Stromata*, vi. 13.

we recall but can never repeat. In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. By faith in Him, by a personal union to Him, we enter into possession of that eternal life which alone is life indeed.

2. We pass from Christ to the Church. It has been maintained that Jesus never gave “ any positive precept directed toward outward separation from the Jewish community, or the formal statutory constitution of a new community.”¹ In support of this view, one might urge the tenacity with which, as represented in the early chapters of the Book of Acts, the Apostles clung to the Temple Courts and the rites of the Old Testament Church. Yet it can hardly be denied that many things in the conduct and teaching of our Lord point toward a new departure. When the blind man who had received his sight was cast out of the synagogue, Jesus, we are told, found him ; and at once there follows the memorable discourse on the True Fold, within which every believer finds a home.² No doubt, this represents the actual course of events. Certainly the gift of the Holy Ghost rendered inevitable the formation of a new society within which the Christian ideal should find expression. All life tends to visibility, each type under its proper form ; yet the life is presupposed by the first faint effort at development. The Church exists in virtue not of her organization, but of her life ; she appeals not to forms which are tentative and transient, always inadequate, but to the living principle, the

¹ Titius, *Lehre von der Seligkeit*. See Oman's *Church and the Divine Order*, p. 28.

² John, chaps. ix. and x.

Spirit of Christ, dwelling within. Just here Protestant Churches differ from the Romish and pseudo-Catholic. According to these, it is the ministry that makes the Church ; where there is no valid ministry, in apostolic succession, there is no Church. With us, the Church is a spiritual creation, to which no one of many possible forms can be reckoned essential. She is the Body of Christ because she is in living union with Him as her Head. " Ubi Spiritus, illic Ecclesia."

3. The fulness that is in Christ He has committed to the Church ; or rather, as He dwells in the Church, His fulness becomes hers not to command but to convey, not to determine but to dispense. She is the House Beautiful, the Royal Palace, where we never fail to find Him in His appointed means of grace. She is His Body ; the foot with which He follows us, the hand with which He lays hold on us, the throbbing heart through which there flow to us, from out the boundless deep, tides of that life whose eternal home is in Him. Of the Church, as a collective unity, that is true which is not true of any one of her members. Each limb and cell of the body lives ; yet the life is in no one of them but in the body as a whole. So, while each Christian is quickened by the Spirit of Christ, it is in the Church as a whole that the *pleroma*, the fulness of the Spirit, dwells. To her He reveals His will, and through her accomplishes His purpose in the redemption of the world. Thus the Church has a place and function in the economy of grace, which must not be ignored because it is secondary and not primary. She mediates between the believer and Christ, by witnessing to the

truth, and dispensing the grace, that are in Him. It is in fellowship with her we live that life which yet is ours only as she brings us directly and personally into touch with Him. Accordingly, in the Apostles' Creed, the utterance not of an intellectual conviction so much as of a spiritual experience, we confess our faith not only in the Holy Ghost, but in the Holy Catholic Church and in the Communion of Saints.

Yet there is need here of a wise reserve. It is with the eye we see, with the ear we hear, with the mouth we speak. These are the normal avenues of communication between us and a world where soul and body are subtly combined. But psychical research has not been wholly in vain. We know enough to-day to realize that the body is the home or workshop of the spirit, not a prison within which it is rigidly confined, as if the normal avenues of communication were absolutely indispensable. Under certain conditions, in moments of abnormal excitation, we can see without the eye, we can hear without the ear, we can speak without articulate utterance. “ Spirit with spirit can meet.” And a power of which we are ourselves possessed, we cannot deny to our Maker. No loyalty to the Church, no sense of indebtedness or responsibility to her, may induce us to “ tie up ” the grace of God, or the working of His Spirit, to any so-called “ means of grace.” In the calm beauty of a summer morning, in the gracious influence of a happy home, in the mystery of life and death as daily unfolded to us, in the tender wistfulness after a higher life born within us, we know not how, the Spirit of God works directly on us, creating those

moral and spiritual conditions, that receptivity, apart from which the witness of the Church must fall on deaf ears and dead hearts. So it was, not only with a Roman centurion like Cornelius, but with many a pagan saint. For the love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind, and the working of His Spirit manifold and mysterious.

4. As she is the Body of Christ, the marks of the Church are threefold: Sanctity, Unity, and Catholicity. (a) "The essential character of Christendom, in its first period, was a new, holy life, and a sure hope, both founded on repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ."¹ St. Paul, writing to the Church in Corinth, identifies it with "them who are sanctified in Christ Jesus."² He adds the phrase: "Called to be saints," evidently realizing that then, as now, even in the best of Christians, sanctity is a calling or ideal rather than an experience or fact. (b) The pursuit of a common ideal, the possession of a common life, brought to believers a new sense of fellowship in Christ. "They continued in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers."³ No doubt, as the Church grew, the outward expression of this fellowship became less and less adequate. Men were one in Christ who never met each other in the flesh. Yet the unity of the Spirit persisted, laying deep, amid the disintegrating forces of the age, the foundations of a new society which survived the fall of Rome and to-day may claim to be world-wide. (c) This unity did not imply a mechanical dependence of part on part, but

¹ Harnack.² 1 Cor. i. 2.³ Acts ii. 42.

the interpenetration of each part by that which is essential to the whole. As in the Platonic Philosophy the Idea of the Beautiful came to birth, imperfectly yet really, in every beautiful thing, so the Christian Ideal found itself realized in each distinct community of believers. “ Where two or three are met in My name, there am I,” and “ Ubi Christus, ibi Ecclesia.” Thus was the Church catholic, according to the original sense of that often misunderstood word.¹ The power or promise of the whole was present in each of her parts, as Ignatius, using the word for the first time, writes : “ Wherever Christ may be, there is the Catholic Church.” Thus it was when Paul and Silas “ spake the word ” by the banks of the Strymon and baptized their first European converts; just as to-day, when godly men and women, few in number but strong in faith, break bread, the whole beauty and mystery of the Catholic Ideal is often realized.

Such is the New Testament conception of the Church. How it passed away; how catholicity, an intensive quality, was confounded with universality or spatial extent; how unity, as a spiritual experience, gave way before the constraints of a common creed imposed from without; how the shining ideal of a holy Church was lost amid the mists of an age infected by worldliness: all this is written large on the page of Church History. By

¹ Thus in classic Greek (see Pater’s *Plato and Platonism*, p. 74): (“ Ταῦτον πανταχοῦ εἶδος—ὅλον καὶ ὑγιές, ἐν κατὰ πάντων, διὰ παντῶν, καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶδι—καθ’ ὅλου; One and the same species in every place, whole and sound, one in regard to, and through and upon, all particular instances of it; Catholic.”) Compare Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, Book vi. 13. 2. See also in Liddell and Scott’s *Dictionary* under καθόλου: “ A common term, as opposed to τὸ καθ’ ἑκάστων, a singular, or a universal term, as opposed to τὸ κατὰ μέρος, a particular.”

the middle of the second century Calixtus could proclaim the Church as "*corpus permixtum*," essentially a mixed society where tares had as good a right to grow as wheat. This rapid decline forced on men a distinction between the actual and the ideal, the visible and invisible Church. The distinction might be hard to define, harder still to defend ; yet there it was, as Origen sorrowfully admits : "*Ita fit ut interdum qui foras mittitur, intus sit ; et ille foris, qui intus videtur retineri.*"

5. As a society, the Church must organize her forces ; and that not so much in virtue of any positive obligation as by a spiritual instinct. For, as in the natural body, if all were ear or eye, there were not only confusion of parts but an impoverishment of the life whose unity realizes itself amid persistent variety, so it is with the Church. If all aspired to pray or preach, to rule or teach, to exercise discipline or administer the sacraments, the beautiful order and manifold variety of the common life were effaced. Hence, as in a tree, the same living principle finds expression in root, stem, and branch, in leaf and flower bearing seed, so in the Church of Christ there is not only diversity of gifts but a delegation of functions through the establishment of what are called Ecclesiastical Orders. "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ." ¹ "But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." ² What form the gifts may take, whether the ministry

¹ Eph. iv. 11.

² 1 Cor. xii. 11.

of the Church at any one time or place be twofold or threefold, is of no essential importance, so long as the Spirit is working in her to the edification of the Body of Christ.

But here two points must be noted. (a) In dealing with the Church, we must not unduly press the figure of the body. If the eye be separated from the body, it ceases to see ; and the whole body loses its power of vision. There is no possible concentration of vital force known to us that can enable the ear to do the work of the eye. But the Church in committing to certain men authority to minister at the altar or to ordain, does not thus surrender anything of her inherent power. If by persecution or apostasy she is bereft of her pastors and teachers, she is not left, like Niobé, to mourn a childless old age. She falls back on that priesthood which is her original and inalienable birthright, on the fulness of the Spirit dwelling within her, to repair her loss. Thus, as in nature, does the winter of her loneliness and discontent yield to the spring and summer of a reviving life. That carries us far, as Luther, who is always bold, confesses : “ If a little company of pious Christian laymen were taken prisoners and carried away to a desert where they had not a priest consecrated by a bishop, and were then to agree to elect one of themselves to baptize and celebrate the Mass, to absolve and preach, this man would be as truly a priest as if all the Bishops and Popes had consecrated him ! ” That is to say, when a living community acknowledges a gift which God has conferred, then Paul’s two tests are satisfied in all essentials. There is a valid ministry, although the customary forms have

been ignored.¹ (b) Yet again, the Church does not act thus of her own impulse or will. Neither in ordinary nor in exceptional circumstances are the power and authority ultimately her own ; she acts in the name of her Lord. She never ordains a man of whom she does not believe that Christ has already called him, whom she does not regard as “signed and quoted” by the inward working of the Spirit for the ministry she entrusts to him. Ordination is not the creation of a caste but the recognition of a charism. Within these limits, loyally observed, she finds herself impregnable. The theory of Apostolic Succession which we oppose is confronted by a persistent risk of the suspension of historic continuity. Let it be only, as Bishop Gore triumphantly proclaims, one chance in a million, there it is, like a nightmare, to haunt her. But the true Church, in touch with her living Lord and conscious of the guidance of His Spirit, looking not back but up, can face the future without the shadow of a fear. “Because I live, ye shall live also.” In this sense truly, but in this sense alone, the Ministry “descends from above.”

6. With the Orders thus constituted there will always go the corresponding grace, insight or utterance, ruling or teaching. This is the faith of the Church, that when she acts in humble dependence on her Lord, He will not fail to ratify her action ; the gift will enrich the office. Hence we see the importance of ordination, which is not merely a graceful and welcome recognition on the part of the Church we are to serve, but her solemn and confident appeal to the great Head of the Church to do,

¹ See Macgregor's Baird Lecture : *The Freedom of the Christian Man*.

here and now, not perhaps in other form but in fuller measure, what He has already done, bestowing grace on “ this, His servant,” so fitting him for the work to which he is set apart. The answer to this prayer is often vividly realized. Whitefield tells us how, as the hands of the Bishop were laid upon his head, his heart was filled with a deep and holy joy. Of one highly honoured in our own Church, R. M. M’Cheyne, we read : “ There was a rapid growth in his soul, perceptible to all who knew him well, from this time. Even his pulpit ministrations, he used to say, became easier to him. He had earnestly desired that the day of his ordination might be a time of new grace ; he expected that it would be so ; and there was a peculiar work to be done by his hands, for which the Holy Spirit did prepare him.” Even when this is not consciously realized, it should be claimed, and indeed taken for granted, by an act of faith. Yet here again—so is the right path beset with dangers—we must guard against the idea of a grace that works mechanically, *ex opere operato*. No dignity or decorum in the Ordination Service can give it any value apart from faith in him who is ordained. We can imagine a man ordained by all the Bishops and Presbyters of a province or kingdom, who yet, in the absence of any receptivity, wanting faith, remains a layman to the end of his days, a profane person while ministering about the altar. “ Ordination,” says St. Augustine, “ is the prayer of the people ” ; and the blessing sought in faith can be received by faith alone.

7. Whether the grace of ordination be indelible, is a question much disputed, as Bishop Gore admits ; and

the answer to it is still dubious. Rightly the Church regards a man, when ordained, as holding a peculiar place and character within her fellowship. She believes that the grace once solemnly bestowed on him through her hands does, however he may lapse from the exercise of his office, await him still, should he repent. She is therefore more ready to suspend than to depose, thus leaving open a way of return. For "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." We admit the principle; yet we dare not presume on it. One might as well affirm that, once baptized, a man is a saint for life, however he fall into deadly sin, as that, once ordained, he is a priest for ever, however he may prove faithless to his calling. In this a High Churchman like Cyprian speaks out with no uncertain sound: "A people obedient to God's precepts and fearing God, ought to separate themselves from a sinful *præpositus*, and not associate themselves with the sacrifices of a sinful priest, specially as they themselves have power either to choose a worthy priest or to reject an unworthy one." Thus interpreted, the question of the Indelibility of Orders is purely academic and need not further detain us.

Such is the Evangelical theory of the Church and her Orders. We cannot doubt that it moves along the lines laid down in the New Testament and is true to the idea of the Church as a spiritual society. Let me, in closing, emphasize one point.

In this exposition of Presbytery as Scriptural, we have no desire to deny the theory of development within the Church, as advanced, *e.g.*, by Newman; or to deny to the Church the power to modify her constitution, as at

the Reformation, or to add to her Orders in accordance with fresh needs and as the Spirit of Christ may direct. Such a theory, while capable of abuse, is in no sense “ infidel ” ;¹ indeed it alone consists with faith in a living Church. If, then, we object to the doctrine of a Three-fold Ministry, it is not because we do not find it in the New Testament. We object to it, because it is imposed on us as part of the original equipment of the Church, and therefore essential to her existence. We object to it, further, because of the doctrine of Sacramental Grace with which it is associated—a conception of the Church’s life and work, and of the Divine purpose and plan, which is antagonistic to the teaching of the New Testament. Let us take a further step. We have no invincible objection to Episcopacy pure and simple. We recognize indeed that it has its dangers, tending to breed an exclusive and aristocratic spirit and thus to transform the Brotherhood of the Apostolic Church into the Hierarchy of the Middle Ages. But no system of Church Government is free from danger. We are not unaware of the weakness of our own : the waste of time involved, the risk not only of divided counsels, but of tardy and ineffective action, as is often seen in our Church Courts. For the sake of greater efficiency, we might well consent to a modified Episcopacy, a delegation of certain powers, administrative and even legislative, to men specially fitted for such work. We recall the fact that in the *Book of Discipline*—the original outline of a Presbyterian polity—provision is made for the appointment of Super-

¹ As is held by Principal Cunningham. See his *Historical Theology*, vol. i. p. 40.

intendents, Bishops in all but name. However jealously we guard ourselves, we cannot escape the dominance of powerful personalities. From time to time we find ourselves entangled in a practical Episcopacy, without the formal recognition which would give it a fair chance to work well. It is neither from the name nor from the thing itself we shrink. What it is impossible for us to cede is that Episcopal Government is essential to the Church, and Episcopal Ordination the only doorway to a valid ministry. I trust it is no stupid pride that prompts us to reject the offer of re-ordination at the hands of some friendly Bishop. The thing no doubt hurts one's reason, as John Howe protests. Still, we might gladly be as fools for Christ's sake, submitting even to the irrational for the unity and progress of the Church. But there are things which hurt the conscience ; to these we cannot submit, even for the Church's sake. We cannot dismiss the witness of the past : we cannot disown the work of good men on whom the seal of God is broadly set ; we cannot discredit those ancient and simple rites through which Christ still meets us, as no better than *splendida vitia*, conferring at best what Bishop Gore calls uncovenanted mercy—that is, a position of tolerance within the Household of Faith. That we cannot.

Is there then no hope of reunion among us ? Must the Ministry of Reconciliation founder on the initial conception of its mission, before it once begin its work ? Is there no higher standpoint, no “ independent vantage-ground, transcending the stream of the ages,” from which we may review this ancient controversy, and rescue what is good and true on either side ? May

we not dream of a Church which shall combine the excellences of Episcopacy and Presbytery ; a Church in which antiquity and authority shall have their due, while the freedom of the Spirit, expressing itself in diverse forms, enriches the common life ; a Church in which the Bishop shall have his place, *primus inter pares*, presiding among his fellow-presbyters, not as a lord over God’s heritage but as the hand and head and acting organ of the Church, according to the ideal of Ignatius and Cyprian in an age when there was still one Church, “ doing nothing on his own private judgment but everything with the counsel of his clergy and the consent of the laity ” ? Listen to these words, written by Richard Baxter in 1656 : “ Brethren, I speak not all this without apparent reason. We have as sad divisions among us in England, considering the piety of the persons and the smallness of the matters in dispute, as most nations under heaven know. The most that keeps us at odds is but the right form and order of Church Government. Is the distance so great, that Presbyterian, Episcopalian, and Independent might not be well agreed ? Were they but heartily willing and forward for peace, they might. I know they might. I have spoken with some moderate men of all parties, and I perceive by their concessions, that it were an easy work.” We may doubt whether the work be as easy as it seemed to the saintly Baxter. That it is a work that lies near to our hand, and from which we dare not turn aside, who can doubt ? That the Church should be divided, the Body of Christ torn asunder, the creation of the Spirit split up, on questions of forms ; that there should be rivalries among us such

as must persist while we stand apart, that there should be so little of that sympathy which can only strengthen as we draw together ; this is, and must be, a grief to us because it is a dishonour to Him whose name we bear. How small our differences appear as we grope our way back to the Upper Room, with its still air and fellowship of love, and join in the great High-Priestly prayer : “ That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me.”

PART II.—WHOLLY PRACTICAL

CHAPTER VI

THE CALL TO THE MINISTRY

THERE is a fine story which has come down to us from the days of the old Greek heroes. When Theseus was fifteen years of age, his mother took him to a hill-top on which stood a temple of Apollo. Pointing to a wood hard by, she bade him go there, find a great stone lying at the foot of a plane-tree, lift it, and bring her what he should find underneath. He found the stone; he tugged at it till the sweat stood on his brow and the tears in his eyes, but the stone would not lift. He tried it again and again, year after year, with the same result. Meantime he spent long days in racing and wrestling, taming horses and hunting the boar, and, on his eighteenth birthday, in the prime of his manhood, returned, saying to himself: "Though the heart burst within me, that stone shall up!" He tugged once more; the stone stirred, and, with a shout, he rolled it aside. Underneath lay the sandals and the sword with which afterwards he did his life's work. That story is full of the spirit of youth, as all young men will recognize. Youth attempts the impossible; measures itself with a

splendid insolence against every opposing force. Though it turn the world upside down, it will have its way. Alas ! it has its limits. " Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men utterly fail." Sometimes the heart breaks in the sore struggle, and yet the stone will not up.

Before Edward Irving came to London to begin his brilliant but meteoric career, he spent a day with a friend on the Gareloch. As they were walking in the fields, they came to a five-barred gate which Irving vaulted with ease. His friend said : " Man, Irving, I never knew you were an athlete ! " Irving turned on him thus : " Look here ! Once I wrote an essay, and you said : ' Man, Irving, I never knew you were a classic.' Once I preached a sermon and you said : ' Man, Irving, I never knew you were a poet.' Here I have leapt a gate, and you say : ' Man, Irving, I never knew you were an athlete.' Now you shall see what great things I will do ! " Gentlemen, it may be permitted me, at the outset, to express the hope that there is in you all something of that exuberant vitality, that boundless energy, that splendid confidence in yourselves ; for indeed you will need it all. It is a long race that lies before you and a hard fight. Every ounce of energy and every spark of fire will tell. But you will need more than these. You must draw your strength from deeper springs than Nature knows. St. Paul prays for the Ephesians, in days when every Christian convert was a minister of Christ, that the eyes of their understanding may be opened, that they may know the hope of their calling and the exceeding greatness of the power of God

working in them.¹ It is of that calling and of that power we are now to speak.

From our present point of view, the Bible may be regarded as a gallery of portraits, vivid sketches of men who, as priests or prophets, served their generation according to the will of God. Of each one of them it is true that he was definitely called to his ministry. The call came in various ways and at various times. It came to Samuel when still a child in the Temple; and all Israel knew that the Lord had established him to be a prophet. Happy those who in their angel infancy are thus called, and who through a long lifetime never waver in their loyalty to an early choice. It came to David when a youth. The visit of Samuel to his father's house, the high talk heard that day at Jesse's table, the kind words spoken to a boy by one whom all Israel honoured, sealed him for the noble service in which he spent his life. It came to Moses as he saw the burdens under which his people groaned; to Gideon as he threshed wheat by the winepress to hide it from the Midianites; to Amos as he followed his sheep. It came to Isaiah in the year when King Uzziah died. His soul bowed before the vision of an incomparable Majesty beneath which the pillars of the Temple shook. I need not further enumerate. Now, confessedly, there is something perplexing in this variety. If the same results are achieved under conditions so variable, by what Method of Exclusion can we hope to eliminate the accidental, and discover just what is essential to the Divine Call? On the other hand, there

¹ Eph. i. 18, 19.

is something reassuring here. If no two men were ever called in the same way, the fact that we have not been called as any of them were, or in the way we had perhaps expected, need not trouble us. The one thing to be noted is that somehow the Call must come.

Let us turn now to the Gospels. In Mark iii. 13 we read: "He goeth up into a mountain and calleth to Him whom He would. And He ordained twelve that they should be with Him and that He might send them forth; and they came unto Him." In Luke vi. 12 we read: "He continued all night in prayer to God; and when it was day, He called unto Him His disciples, whom also He named Apostles." In Matthew x. 1 we read: "He called unto Him His twelve disciples and gave them power against unclean spirits." Quite manifestly these three passages, widely as they differ in context and content, serve to supplement each other. Mark notes the place where the call was given—the mountain top with its solemn stillness and wide outlook, its pure strong air; Luke records the night spent in prayer which preceded the call; Matthew, the gift of power which accompanied it. Each point deserves attention; for, no doubt, as the call was given, so it is to be obeyed. Here, then, is the mood to be cultivated, detachment from the world; the manner to be observed, devout self-dedication; and the motive to be applied, the power of God resting on you.

Again from St. Mark we learn that the Call was two-fold. "He called them to be with Him, and that He might send them forth." Not without significance Dr. Hort observes that, while the former of these

received what it required, a prompt obedience, the latter came into force at a later period and under different conditions.¹ There are two great words in the Gospel, Come and Go ; and in responding to the one we gain power to obey the other. The life of active service begins when the habit of communion has been formed. Finally, the three Evangelists agree in this, that He called them one by one, and by name.

There is a pathetic passage in Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*, which forms a striking comment on all this. "How lovely now was every one in my eyes, that I thought to be converted men and women. They shone ; they walked like a people that carried the broad seal of Heaven upon them. Oh, I saw the lot was fallen to them in pleasant places, and they had a goodly heritage. But that which made me sick was that word of Christ in Mark : He called to Him whom He would. This Scripture made me faint and fear ; yet it kindled a fire in my heart. That which made me fear was this, lest Christ should have no liking for me, for He called whom He would. But, oh ! the glory I saw in such a condition did still engage my heart so that I could seldom read of any whom Christ called, but I presently wished, Would that I had been in their shoes, would that I had been born Peter, would that I had been born John, or that I had been by when He called them. How would I have cried : O Lord, call me too ! But, oh, I feared that He would not call me. And truly the Lord let it go thus many months and showed me nothing, either that I was already, or should be called hereafter. But at last, after much time

¹ Mark vi. 7.

spent and many groans to God that I might be partaker of this holy calling, that word came to me : I will cleanse the blood that I have not cleansed, for the Lord dwelleth in Zion. These words, I thought, were sent to encourage me still to wait on God, and signified to me that, if I were not already, yet time might come when I might in truth be converted unto Christ." You see now that it was in the faith that led to a humble acceptance for himself of a grace freely offered to all, that the call came ; and, with the call to Christ, came the call to the ministry.

This call of which we are speaking comes as an event ; it works as an experience ; it confronts us as a situation.

1. You see the disciples by the lakeside, knee-deep in surf, hauling in their nets. As yet they knew nothing of the world that lay behind the soft green hills in whose embrace they had spent their youth ; nor had they thought of any other than the simple life they were then living. Yet we are told that when Jesus passed by and called them, they left all and followed Him. That, of course, is a shorthand way of recording the impression made on them not by a momentary glimpse but by a growing intimacy with Jesus. They were no strangers to each other, they and He. In their narrow world they must have known Him well, as boy and man. A new type of manhood, a new ideal of character, had emerged for them in Him. He came into their lives like a breath of spring, loosening the ties that bound them, wakening, as spring always does waken, new energies within. The old life never lost its charm ; we see how gladly they returned to it after the Resurrection. But He was hence-

forth first. With the vision of Jesus had come the Call; that was the great Event of a lifetime for them.

There is a fine passage in Wordsworth's *Prelude* in which he records what must have been a turning-point in his mental history. He had spent a night in innocent gaiety with some friends and was returning home; and here is what followed:

"Magnificent

The morning rose in memorable pomp,
Glorious as e'er I had beheld. In front
The sea lay laughing at a distance; near,
The solid mountains shone, bright as the clouds,
Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light;
And in the meadows and the lower grounds
Was all the sweetness of a common dawn,
Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,
And labourers going forth to till the fields.
Ah! need I say, dear friend, that to the brim
My heart was full. I made no vows, but vows
Were then made for me; bond unknown to me
Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
A dedicated spirit."

So it is when Christ visits a young soul, coming as a morning without clouds. Lamplight and starlight fade, philandering and philosophizing lose their charm, under the spell of the gracious Presence into which we move as into a world of penetrating spiritual reality. Life can never be the same again.

Gentlemen, were I addressing candidates for the ministry in the Romish or Anglican Communion, it would be natural at this point to say more than I care to say about the Church, her ancient creeds, her mystic rites, her solemn litanies, her yearly round of Fasts and Feasts, her stately Hierarchy wherein the highest place awaits

the humblest, if he have the gifts. I do not wonder that such appeals, urged with deep conviction and glowing rhetoric, capture the ears of men in whom the æsthetic instinct is uppermost. But I confess that when I read them even at their best, I could wish them either more or less ; more, if there is nothing else to be said, but, if there is, then less. You are to be servants of the Church, and you cannot love or reverence her too well. But the Church is the Bride of Christ, and the Bride eyes not her garments, but her dear Bridegroom's face. I am persuaded that we serve her best when we point you directly to Him. You are to be ministers of a Church which affects an almost Spartan austerity ; but you have no need to be ashamed of her simple forms and sober services. There will be moments when, if your heart is full of that uncreated and eternal beauty that is in Christ, you will welcome simplicity as the transparent medium through which He may best be seen and shown. It is Christ, not the Church, that holds men's hearts. Lately, in the life of Dr. J. R. Miller of America, I met this sentence : " For me, Religion can be expressed in one line : Jesus and I are friends. That is my creed." The words reveal the secret of the amazing popularity, both as preacher and writer, of a man who had neither originality of thought nor charm of style to recommend him. " Henceforth I call you friends " ; so says our Lord. And the fact that He owns us, all unworthy, as His friends, leaves us no alternative but to subscribe ourselves, like Paul and Peter and many more, His servants to life's end.

2. But place must be left for the discipline of life ;

and from this point of view the Call, which came as an event, works out as an experience. The three years passed with the great Master were fruitful for the disciples. They learned to know themselves, weak of will, infirm of purpose. At times they shrank from a task for which they felt no fitness. But they learned to know Him too, most chivalrous of friends, most patient of teachers, never covering a fault, or condoning a failure, or concealing an issue, but crowning every honest effort on their part with the most generous recognition. Galilee led to Gethsemane, Gethsemane to Calvary. They stood beneath the cross ; they saw Him there, the Lamb of God, the Saviour of the world. Thus out of their personal relation to Him emerged a new world of interests and aims. The fact that He had saved them was proof that He could save all. They had found their Gospel, and with the Gospel came the obligation to preach it to others.

This also has its bearing on us. A young artist does not rest content with artistic instincts. He studies his art ; gains the mastery of his tools, improves on his methods, corrects his ideals. It is said that Michael Angelo studied anatomy in the vaults of the Vatican. Face to face with naked facts, he acquired that accurate knowledge of the human frame which enabled him to reinvest it with the glorious strength and beauty that mark the creations of his art. You must do the same. Loyalty to the person of Christ will make a Christian of you ; but more is needed to make you a minister. You must study the teaching of Christ. Simple in form, it presents you with a subtle analysis of human nature in

its deepest needs and highest aspirations, as these are met and realized in Him. Keep company with those in whom the Spirit of Christ has dwelt most fully. Take as your masters men in the great evangelical succession. Cyprian owed much to Tertullian ; and daily called for one or other of his works, in the famous phrase : Give me the Master ! Study the Epistles of St. Paul ; keep at your side a copy of Augustine's *Confessions* ; read and re-read the *Imitation of Christ*, the *Reformed Pastor*, and the lives of men like Brainerd and Henry Martyn. In this way you will grow into an experimental knowledge of the Gospel as the power of God unto salvation, which will confirm your call. The three years you spend in the Divinity School are to be to you what the three years spent with Christ were to the apostles ; make the most of them. The exuberance of youth, the exhilaration that attends the pursuit of abstract truth, must yield to a deepening sense of responsibility. Theology is the Queen of the Sciences ; but she is also the first and finest of the arts ; and experience counts for more than theory here. As ministers of Christ you are to be stewards of the mystery, the manifold grace of God. What do you know of it ? “ It is the remedy for sin.” Good ; but what is sin ? “ It is a foul disease that preys on the vitals of a man.” True ; and from a theological point of view not inadequate. But this disease of sin—can you grapple with it ? Have you studied it clinically, so to speak ; watching its working in the only heart to which you have direct access, that is to say, your own ? Hours of weakness, moments of wild excess, may be among your best teachers, if they send you to the throne

of grace for power to conquer sin. More than once I have wakened in the dead of night with a cold sweat on my brow, scared by an evil dream that hounded me through my sleep. Such dreams do not come by accident ; they discover how, beneath an exterior cold as ice and chaste as driven snow, passions slumber that have been set on fire of hell. Never have I prayed more earnestly than then for a clean heart. I am persuaded that experience is the real preparation for the ministry. You will be sent to men who have thought round and round the moral problem of life and found no solution in art or action or, for that matter, in the services of the Church. Can you help them ? Can you tell them from the heart of One who is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by Him ? “ Alas ! ” says Richard Baxter, “ it is the common calamity of the Church to have unregenerate and inexperienced pastors, and to have many men become preachers before they are Christians ; sanctified by dedication to the altar as the priests of God, before they are sanctified by hearty dedication as the disciples of Christ ; and so to worship an unknown God, to preach an unknown Christ, and pray in an unknown Spirit.”

3. For the rest, you may safely wait. The call that came first as an event and then as an experience will come again and again in the actual situation that will confront you. It was the sight of the multitude, as sheep without a shepherd, that drew our Lord out of the privacy He loved. The sight of a city wholly given to idolatry stirred the spirit of St. Paul.

Just here the experience of St. Peter is instructive. You see him going up to the Temple to pray, entering

by the Beautiful Gate where a lame man lay begging alms. Grasp, if you can, the sharp contrast suggested ; here, all that Art could do to embellish what was no better than an empty sepulchre haunted by ghosts of the past, and there, the true Temple, a man made in God's image, flung out to die. It was the pitiful appeal of a discredited Humanity. Peter's heart was deeply moved ; but what had he to offer ? In one sense, nothing ; in another, everything. " Silver and gold have I none. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk."

Cornelius sends for him. With his narrow Jewish prejudices, preferring the pangs of hunger to the proffer of unlawful food, he is thrust into a company of uncircumcised Gentiles, every man of whom is a member of the dominant race, hated and feared. Yet how docile they are, and receptive,—aggressive in the eagerness with which they wait on his word. Who could resist such an appeal, or be silent in such a company ? Without doubt, the Gospel grew on him as he opened it to others and saw the Holy Ghost poured out on these Gentile believers. " Verily, God is no respecter of persons."

He moves on to Antioch, the second city of the Empire, fairest and foulest of the abodes of men. For the first time in his life he is confronted by paganism in its most graceful and seductive form—a Grove of Daphne for a Garden of Gethsemane. Yet even here God's love joins issue with man's sin, and in the presence of a Christian Church, hearts purified by faith, he sees the victory of Love. We have his own interpretation of

the situation : We believe that we shall be saved by the grace of God, even as they. Notice the striking inversion of an old historic order ; the priority in the Kingdom of God yielded up to man as man by one whose boast it had been that he was born a Jew. For the disciples, the world as it opened on them, with its widespread, deep-seated hunger for God, became the measure of the Cross which casts its shadow over all. And once again there came the call to go forth and preach the Gospel.

The days in which we live are not favourable to the work we have in hand. Theology is no longer in vogue. It is hard to make men hear ; harder still to convince them. A growing section of the community is out of touch with the Church, never reached by her message. On the other hand, there never was a day when the need of the Gospel was greater. The bitter hostility, arming nation against nation, which has led to a world-wide war ; the cleavage between capital and labour, with the industrial problems raised ; the desecration of marriage and the break-up of home life ; on one side an airy optimism, on the other a note of exhaustion and despair—these are the facts with which we have to reckon. Do they not themselves constitute a challenge and a call ? In Economics, the law of supply and demand may be left to work itself out ; but here the need is greatest where it is least felt. Supply must anticipate and create demand. Think of that striking picture in the Apocalypse of the merchant of Laodicea. All day long a tide of life has swept through the streets of the city. Business has been brisk and many a bargain made, but now the sun

sets, darkness falls ; all are gone but One. Solemn and stately like the night, *πόντια νύξ*, through which he keeps his lonely vigil star-crowned, he lingers still. Closed doors, deserted streets, the silence that reigns over a crowded city will not let him sleep. Patiently he waits, with outstretched hands. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire. . . . Behold, I stand at the door and knock." We too must knock at closed doors, and look into eyes where no gleam of recognition meets us. It is enough for us that Christ seeks them ; so must we. He will save them, and through us.

One or two points may be noted ere we close.

(a) There is a hereditary and congenital factor in life which may fairly be regarded as the call of God. "Before thou camest out of the womb, I sanctified thee and ordained thee to be a prophet among the nations." ¹ Many of you no doubt belong to clerical families. You were born not only within the Church but on the altar steps, if I may say so. You have learned from infancy to regard yourselves as given up to this work. Others have desired to enter, but found the door closed against them ; prior engagements have been already made, or there is the care of a widowed mother. To such surely the words are applicable : "In that thou hadst it in thine heart, thou hast well done." On the other hand, it needs goodwill rather than great wit to interpret an open door as an invitation to enter. If an unseen hand has flung wide to you the golden gates, if a happy lot brings with it the advantage of a liberal education and ample leisure for

¹ Jer. i.

study, you may well see in this a call to dedicate yourselves to the highest ends. The best of talents is time ; if it is yours, you hardly need to hear the Master say : "Occupy till I come."

(b) No doubt gifts are to be considered. Certainly the days are gone by when, if a man was neither physically fit to bear arms, nor smart enough for business or the Bar, he might be relegated to the Church. The work before you is as exacting as any ; it permits, if it does not require, the exercise of the highest gifts. One speaks here with a certain reserve ; for there is a call which sets aside all hindrances and creates the fitness it requires. Charles Kingsley suffered from a painful stammer ; yet so was he possessed by the love of Christ that, when he rose to address an audience, he forgot his infirmity. Warming to his theme, he became, if not an eloquent, an attractive and persuasive preacher. But such cases are exceptional. Freedom from physical defect, with a good head-piece, a taste for study, an interest in life, powers of ready and impressive utterance, and some gift of leadership, these are the natural points by which a man is marked out for the ministry. And here, as I presume you are all modest men, you will do well if you submit yourselves to the judgment of others. The consent of the Church is an essential factor in the Call. She has a duty to perform here which she sometimes takes too lightly. It is cruel to allow a man to spend the best years of his life in preparation for work for which he is manifestly unfit ; to treat the ministry as if it were a lottery where men must take the risk of drawing a blank. Something might surely be done to sift the candidates ;

and still more to test their progress during the years of preparation. A Divinity student has no business in the pulpit; premature publicity may hinder the easy and natural development of his powers. But in the Sunday school, the mission-room or village chapel, we may soon discover whether he has the instinct of the soul-winner. The Church has no right to ordain a man of whom she has not reason to believe that he has been called of God.

I have had in my possession lately a paper written a few years ago by a Divinity student, now one of our ministers in London. It is entitled: "How may I know that I am called to the Ministry?" It was a college exercise, and the Professor,¹ a man of insight and experience, has marked it as "Quite admirable." Here is the summing-up. "I love Jesus Christ, and am seeking to follow Him. I desire to serve Him, and thus to serve my fellows. I believe that I have certain gifts of intellect and character which can be fitly exercised in the Christian ministry, and, apart from any special circumstances which may have influenced my decision, I believe that I can do better service in the Christian ministry than anywhere else. I do not necessarily hold all these things separate in my mind. They fuse together probably (and probably with other subordinate considerations) into the conviction and enthusiasm that I am called to serve God in this particular way."

(c) But this conviction, this enthusiasm, is not always felt. Life often seems a chapter of accidents, and the strangest of all accidents is that which lands

¹ Now Principal A. Martin, D.D., New College, Edinburgh.

some men in the ministry. Take the case of F. W. Robertson of Brighton. It was his ambition, as a boy, to serve Christ in the army. He applied for a commission ; but, under the impression that his application had failed, he matriculated at Oxford and began to read for Orders. Within five days, the belated commission arrived, only to be set aside. In what might be regarded as an unfortunate accident, he saw the hand of God and would not go back on the surrender he had made. We know how his act of loyalty was honoured, how fruitful and far-reaching was the ministry thus begun. " I hope, I hope in a little while, to get will to answer duty, and skill to answer will." That surely is a safe line to follow. It may be an accident that has sent some of you here, shattering the dreams of youth and many a cherished plan. Even now you may have to confess that there are hours when your heart turns wistfully in some other direction. But if you believe that God has guided your steps and if you are willing to be in His hand, fare forward !

In the Providence of God a man may read a call which he has never heard. St. Paul speaks of himself as *ἑγγος ἐκλογῆς*, a chosen vessel. The phrase is suggestive. Only the Potter knows how much of patient pressure is required, how many a knot must be kneaded out of the clay, before the whirring wheel (*τροχός γένεσεως*) has done its work, fashioning a vessel meet for the Master's use.

(d) Finally, let me remind you that the Call to the Ministry may not be less real and urgent because it finds you diffident or even rebellious. Augustine's " Nolo

episcopari" is famous in Church History. You may flee, as Jonah did, to the ends of the earth, and return, chastened like him, to take up a task from which you shrank. When the Hound of Heaven is on your trail, it is in vain that you seek refuge in art or nature, in business or in a happy home. With deliberate speed, majestic instancy, comes on the vision. Love follows you with bleeding feet. "All things betray him who betrayeth Me." It is this element of compulsion that is the last mark of the true call when it comes. "Then I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name. But His word was in mine heart as a burning fire, shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and could not stay." ¹

"Be sure that God
 Ne'er dooms to waste the strength He deigns impart.
 Ask the gier-eagle why she stoops at once
 Into the vast and unexplored abyss?
 What full-grown power informs her from the first?
 Why she not marvels, strenuously beating
 The silent boundless regions of the sky?
 Be sure they sleep not whom God needs, nor fear
 Their holding light His charge, when every hour
 That finds that charge delayed is a new death." ²

"No man taketh this honour on himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." ³ In other professions, though a man have no special vocation, much may be accomplished by dint of diligence and determination. It is otherwise here. To translate a single soul out of darkness into the light of life is a task beyond the highest human power. Only those whom God sends and with

¹ Jer. xx. 9.

² Browning's "Paracelsus."

³ Heb. v. 4.

whom He goes can succeed. On the other hand, if you are called and sent, you need have no misgivings as to the issue. The conditions of success are as simple as they are imperative. "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing" (John xv. 5).

CHAPTER VII

THE MINISTER AMONG HIS PEOPLE

THE field that lies before us to-day is wide and varied. A volume would be required, rather than a single lecture, to cover it. Fortunately the literature of the subject is accessible to all, and I am absolved from the duty of going into details.

My own experience, on which I must chiefly draw, has been in some respects singularly happy. The early years of my ministry were spent in a country parish on Tweedside. The autumn that followed my ordination was one of unusual beauty. Summer died slowly that year, and on into November we had a succession of warm bright days and glorious sunsets. I can still recall the impression made on one born and bred in the city by the sights and sounds of country life—the soft outline of the hills, harvest fields, woods, and the sheen of the river, here curved like a bow and there darting like an arrow across the plain. Nor can I ever repay the debt I owe to the kindly people who took a young man to their hearts, made the most of his poor attempts, and stimulated him by their appreciation to greater efforts. Their confidence laid on me vows as to which I can only say that I was never wholly unmindful of them.

Some one asked me lately whether it was reasonable

to expect a young Cambridge man to settle down in a Northumbrian parish and devote his energies to a few sheep there in the wilderness. It was easy to remind him of Bishop Creighton, who did his best work under these very circumstances, and to protest that there are men to-day who, after forty years of such quiet work, might pass anywhere as types of the Christian scholar and gentleman. It was still better to be able to assure him that Cambridge men are doing it every day with the happiest results, and finding their powers and their attainments taxed to the utmost to meet the demands it makes upon them. I have a great pity for men from whom has been withheld the priceless boon of seven or eight years in a country pastorate. My pity for them is only surpassed by my admiration for those who, denying themselves this great joy, are ready at the call of duty to plunge straight away into a crowded city parish and battle hand to hand with social conditions that leave them no time for study and little strength even for prayer.

My second charge was, and still is, on the outskirts of London. Here I have learned in some degree to appreciate the stimulus, and sometimes to groan under the burden, of such a lot. Great is the fascination of the World-City. One is haunted by the thought of her multitudinous life, her stately buildings, where art, science, politics, and religion have their thrones. For even in London religion asserts itself as the heart of human life, and nowhere else are there such opportunities to preach the Gospel to those who need it most. And yet I must confess that, after thirty years in London, my heart is still in the country ; and, were it possible

for me to live my life again, I should choose to be born to a country parson's lot, as Hooker says, "seeing the blessing of God spring out of the earth, free from noise, and eating that bread which he may properly call his own in privacy and quietness."¹

The opening years of a man's ministry are beset with serious risks. We shall suppose that the ordination day is over. The little band of friends who gathered round, to testify in flattering terms of his unprecedented gifts and graces, have said their say and gone their way, and he is left to himself. Hitherto his days have been chalked out for him, the books to be read, the tasks to be performed; now he is absolutely master of his time and strength. There is a temptation, on the one hand, to do nothing, and on the other, to do too much. Most of all, there is the temptation to shift from one of these extremes to the other, living in spasms of feverish activity and deadly dullness. I have no desire to dictate; but I suggest that morning hours should be reserved for study, leaving the afternoon and evening free for parish work. Divide your days; map out your weeks; make a plan for your life, not too complex or ambitious, and, having made it, stick to it tenaciously.

A minister's first care is for the young. "Feed My lambs" was the charge given to the premier apostle, and those who stand in the Evangelical Succession dare not neglect it. You will, therefore, find your way at once to the Sunday School. So much has been said and written about Primary Departments, Graded

¹ So I wrote in 1916. The wish has very unexpectedly been gratified. And now—?

Lessons, and Teachers' Helps, that it were a waste of time to linger over them. Rather let me, if I may, insinuate a warning. The psychology of child-life, however fruitful as a study, is no adequate equipment for your work. The object of the Sunday School is not to educate the mind. That is being done elsewhere on a scale and with a success we can never rival. Our business is to rouse the conscience and to win the heart. And there, the man is more than the method ; it is the spirit, not the science, that tells.

Lately I had an experience to which I venture to refer. I had to address a gathering of children, undisciplined and turbulent young life. I found myself elevated on a high platform, with a substantial reading-desk between me and my audience. As often happens, some of the youngest children were placed at the far end of the hall behind their stalwart seniors. I exerted myself mightily to secure their attention, but in vain. At last, yielding to a sudden impulse, I descended from my perch, found their level, and got well in among them. Moving rapidly up and down, I talked to them in a quiet measured tone. The effect was immediate. Because I was moving, they chose to sit still ; because they could hear me easily, it pleased them quietly to listen. I had gained their attention, and, with very little effort to myself, retained it to the end. Generalize from that experiment. Our business in the ministry is not to talk down to the children from the pulpit but to find their level. Be among them as much as you can ; be, as Christ was, the children's friend.

But your best chance to influence the young people of your congregation comes at a later stage, when child-

hood passes into adolescence and you have to prepare them for a first Communion. If at all possible, you will have a Communicants' Class. It saves your time, and comradeship is an important factor in education. Even if you have only one candidate, or a small number who cannot come together at the same hour, do not grudge the time and strength spent in carefully preparing them. I shall suppose that I have five evenings to devote to this work, and ask myself how I may use them to best advantage.

On the first evening I begin with a general statement of Christian Truth. All these young people are well-disposed ; but probably they do not all perceive what is implied in decision for Christ. I take the Bible as my text, and point out that the religious history of the race, as recorded there, falls into two sections or stages. There is an Old Testament, or Covenant, and a New ; one of works and one of grace ; two Covenants, but, as Oliver Cromwell reminds us from his death-bed, " put into one before the foundation of the world." I dwell on the fact that the history of the race is rehearsed in that of each individual. We are born under the Law. Conscience is a Sinai, a court of assize, in every man's bosom ; innocence, freedom, peace are at stake, alas ! often lost before we waken up to their value. On the other hand, it is of our own will, and by an act of faith, that we pass over into the New Covenant, so as to be no longer under the Law but under grace. I then expound the benefits of the New Covenant, the pardon of sin, the gift of the Holy Ghost, adoption into the family of God. I bid them mark well the alterna-

tive presented, between the Law with its prohibitions and penalties, and the Gospel with its note of promise : Thou shalt not, and, I will.¹

On the second evening, I take as my subject the Sacraments, pointing out (*a*) their authority, as instituted by Christ ; (*b*) their nature, as an appeal to the senses, meant not to supersede but to confirm a prior act of faith ; and (*c*) their effect, in representing, sealing, and applying to the individual those gifts of grace, a general offer of which is made in the Gospel to all. Here the history of the word "Sacrament" may be enlarged on. It denotes (*a*) a sum of money, deposited for safety in lawless days within the Temple courts ; (*b*) the oath sworn by a Roman youth when he enlisted in the army, an oath of obedience and loyalty ; (*c*) a solemn act by which, as Christians, we put our lives into Heaven's keeping and enrol ourselves on the side of Christ.

The third evening I devote to Baptism. What does it mean to these young people ? Here I avail myself of a homely illustration. When I have paid the price of a book, it belongs to me ; but, to make this known to others, I write my name on the first page, left blank for that purpose. So we are redeemed by Christ ; and, in token of this, His holy and blessed name has been written over our lives in the unconscious days of infancy. We speak of the "volume" of our life, each day being a fresh page turned ; but right on to the last page with its "Finis," He claims all as His. Here is my chance to point out that the best blessings of life are ours, not of

¹ Passages recommended for study : Gen. ii. ; Ex. xx. ; Jer. xxxi. ; Heb. viii.

our own choice or will, but by the (seeming) accident of birth, and that privilege involves responsibility. The child born in a palace, heir to an empire, cannot divest himself either of the splendour of his destiny or the responsibility it imposes. So, born within the covenant of grace, we are "under obligation to be Christ's faithful soldiers to life's end." ¹

On the fourth evening we consider the Lord's Supper.

(a) It is an act of Commemoration. I bid them think of Trafalgar Square with its famous statue of Lord Nelson, commemorating a great victory that saved the Empire, but cost the victor his life. The transition is easy to a greater victory and a more costly sacrifice that has saved the world. (b) It is an act of Confession. At the Lord's Table we bear witness of Jesus that He saves His people from their sins. But, for a witness, the testing-time begins with the cross-examination which confirms or discredits the statement he has made. We, too, must make good our Christian profession not with our lips only but with our lives, not only at the Holy Table, but in business and social life, dying daily unto sin. (c) It is an act of Communion. Every common meal is sacramental, reminding us of the dependence of the part on the whole, the individual on the universal life which comes to consciousness in it. The food we eat turns, we know not how, to blood and brain; it lives and works in us. So with the higher life of the soul. "My flesh is meat indeed and My blood is drink indeed." "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." This

¹ Study Deut. vi. and 2 Tim. i. 1-14.

is the open secret which lies behind a truly Christian experience. It is impossible to eliminate the element of mystery even from our Protestant doctrine of the Sacrament.¹

On the closing evening I expound 1 Cor. xi. Here something has to be said about the Love-Feasts of the early Church, their use and abuse, as contrasted with the more formal observance of the Lord's Supper for which St. Paul pleads. Something too may be said about the permanent obligation implied in Church fellowship. There is also the duty of preparation and self-examination in prospect of a first, and indeed of every, act of Communion. Here one dwells on the word "unworthily" ² which, when misunderstood, has proved a stumbling-stone to many. Luther used to say that he alone is a worthy communicant who feels his own unworthiness. And Milton, in a famous line, speaks of "the worthy bidden guest." For surely all whom the Master has bidden the servant may welcome to the Feast.

Let me repudiate the idea that the ministry to which you aspire is merely "prophetic." We too have an altar. To prepare men for it, to meet them there in the name of our Lord with the seal and symbol of His grace, is the sweetest and most sacred act of our calling.

Pastoral Visitation will occupy much of your time, particularly in a country parish. I have the happiest memories of winter days when I spent the morning in reading, and started forth, after a midday meal, for some out-lying farm-town or village. Arrived there about

¹ Read and explain relevant portions of John vi.

² 1 Cor. xi. 27.

four o'clock, I spent an hour or two in the cottages, making myself acquainted with the events of their domestic history. Hospitality was never far to seek, and then came the crowning hour when all would gather in the great kitchen of the farm-house for an informal service. Hymns were sung, a brief passage read, a simple message given. So I found my way home in the moonlight, seldom without an escort. That was the elect hour when, as we moved swiftly through the quiet night, some shy youth found courage to tell the tale of new desires and aspirations wakening in his soul. In a great city all this, the real pastoral work, becomes very difficult. Hours are late, engagements many; and there is the conventionality of city life to reckon with. Many men feel that they are not suited for such work, and dread to degenerate into the fireside gossip. One fine specimen of an Anglican parson confesses that it takes him more time to prepare his soul for a full-dress dinner than to write a sermon. Admire the thoroughness of the man, but scent a danger there. On no account must we be precise or professional. It is not needful always to talk religion. Something has been done, if the barrier of reserve between us and our people has been broken down; they will be more ready to come to church on Sunday and listen to us. And even in the most desultory conversation you may glean hints that will prove helpful in preparation for the pulpit.

But, after all, we are not bound to old methods when the virtue has gone out of them. I think I have done most of my pastoral work of late, not on my neighbour's doorstep, but at my own fireside. I ask a man in to see

me some evening. We talk about books, business, and public affairs. He is shy at first, and there is a good deal of fencing before we get to close quarters. Perhaps he has the better of me, and beats me off again and again. I give him up as hopeless, and proceed to show him out. Then something is said, I hardly know what, and in a moment there is a flash of recognition and a thrill of contact as our spirits meet. After that it takes him hours to reach the door; midnight has struck ere he is gone. But the stars are shining overhead, and the still earth breathes her blessing over us as we part. You will have to put as much of yourself into such an interview as into most sermons; it will repay the outlay.

When there is sickness in a house the pastor hastens thither. The rules for the sickroom are only three, but they are binding. The first is Restraint. Lower your voice and compose your gesture. Banish everything that might bespeak haste and jar on the racked nerves of the sufferer. The second is Suggestion. The sickroom is not a place for systematic teaching. A single text, deftly chosen with insight into the particular case, may be all you can insinuate; and it may be all that is required. But how much need is here for forethought and prayer. The third rule is Concentration. Do not beat about the bush; brush aside mere circumstances, and get to the heart of the business. Hold Christ up before the closing eye. Speak to the sick man, not of himself, his good or bad deeds, but of the Everlasting Mercy. Learned prelate and unlearned peasant are alike when it comes to dying; they want a sure word on which to lean.

Perhaps a word ought to be said about the exercise of discipline. If you read Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* you will see with what pitiless and mischievous severity our fathers discharged this duty. And good Richard Baxter has seen fit to draw out and print in full an indictment, meant to be read from the pulpit against some evil-doer ; of which all I shall say is that, with the utmost stretch of imagination, I cannot conceive myself reading it from my pulpit. The necessity for ecclesiastical discipline cannot be questioned. Those who deny the faith may not be admitted to the Sacraments ; nor may those who openly dishonour Christ be continued in the fellowship of His Church. But we must not forget the object of such discipline, which is, not that the Church may salve her own conscience, but that she may save the souls of her children. If, as we cannot doubt, that end be better secured by private remonstrance than by public rebuke, we need not hesitate between them.

On the other hand, self-discipline is never out of date or place. Here the inquisition cannot well be too searching or the judgment passed too severe. Nothing else will maintain a high standard of Christian character and conduct in a parish as does the example of a consistent and consecrated minister. It is related of Archbishop Leighton, that " after witnessing the holy and mortified life of this eminent saint, one at least became sensible that a man is in no safe condition, unless he is striving for the highest degree of sanctity. If none shall go to heaven, he exclaimed, but so holy a man as that, what will become of me ? "

Let me briefly indicate some of the points of a good minister :

1. *Humility*.—You must practise, as well as preach it. A young minister is apt to have an excessive idea of his own importance. He has studied at an ancient University, taken a double-first in Classics or Philosophy, and made some slight contributions to the literature of the day, of which he is not unmindful. He expects to be treated with deference. He gives his judgment *ex cathedrâ*, with a note of finality which precludes appeal. He speaks as might an oracle, except that he seldom waits to be consulted. Years pass before he finds his own level among the shrewd country folk, weavers and shepherds, who long since have summed him up and found him a negligible quantity. Nothing else so blinds a man as does pride. On the other hand, no weapon is so powerful to disarm opposition as a meek and quiet spirit. If you would be enthroned in the confidence and affection of your people, be clothed with humility. Recall the beautiful words of George Herbert, erstwhile courtier, with an exquisite taste in literature and “a genteel humour in fine clothes.”¹ “It hath formerly been adjudged that the domestic servants of the King of Heaven should be of the noblest families on earth. And though the iniquity of these late times has made clergymen meanly valued and the sacred name of Priest contemptible, yet I will labour to make it honourable by consecrating all my learning and all my poor abilities to advance the cause of that God who gave them ; knowing that I can never do too much

¹ See Walton's *Life*.

for Him who has done so much for me as to make me a Christian. And I will labour to be like my Saviour ; by making Humility lovely in the eyes of all men and by following the merciful and meek example of my dear Jesus."

2. *Sympathy*.—Men are not like cattle ; you cannot drive them or deal with them in herds. Each one has his own individuality and should be studied. You must make them feel that you understand them ; that you are their friend. Meet them half-way, on common ground. Talk to them of things they know better than you do, *e.g.*, the state of the crops, the price of wool or, if in the city, the conditions of the labour market. Make their world your own ; it may be narrow, you will find it can be intense. It required a great poet like Wordsworth to discover the poetry of humble life ; it requires a true pastor to discover the possibilities of the commonplace, the heroism of many a humble home. It was the sympathy of Jesus, that touch of Nature which never failed Him, that drew men to Him and opened their hearts to His message. The parables show how intimately He knew their home life and could use its joys and sorrows to point them to higher things. A miracle was never merely a *tour de force*, but always His ready response to some tale of woe which had touched His heart. Kind words cost little ; kind deeds not much more ; yet what a harvest they yield ! " I have been interrupted," says Robertson of Brighton, " by the visit of a lady of my congregation, who came to take leave. She told me, with delight, of the tears of gratitude she had witnessed in a poor girl to whom,

in passing, I had given a kind look on going out of church on Sunday. What a lesson ! How cheaply happiness can be given. I remember doing it, full of sad feelings ; passing on, and thinking no more about it. Yet it gave an hour's sunshine to a human life and lightened the burden of a human heart for a time."

3. *Patience*.—A good workman is never indifferent to results. Yet often, like the prophet, you may have to confess : " I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain." Human nature finds expression in that note of despondence ; but faith comes in to correct it : " Yet my judgment is with the Lord, and my reward ¹ with my God." ² The true tests of our work are such as elude both eye and ear ; the real reward is not that outward success which you may miss, but a deepening fellowship with God and man in the work itself. You will do well to remember that in spiritual as in natural husbandry, there is need of patience. You never know how much is going on underground ; how long, before the first green shoot appears, the vital forces of Nature are at work within the seed. A child's young mind receives and records impressions of which this only is certain, that to let the light in on them too soon is to see them fade away. Men who read and think are apt to resent a pressure that threatens to bias the mind where decision is of value only if it is free. Bergson's *Creative Evolution* has deeply impressed many of us who are not professed disciples of the brilliant Frenchman. We recognize that life is continuous growth. We distinguish between the vital process and the act of reflection which

¹ וְתִשָּׁלֵם. See Cheyne *in loco*.

² Isa. xlix. 4.

tends, by defining, to arrest it. "Time is the stuff of which our lives are made"; and time is eternity come to consciousness in a human soul. Need we wonder, then, if we are sometimes met with silence when we had looked for speech? All tenderness, wistfulness, and hope have place in a minister's life; they are indeed important factors in his success. But anything like fretfulness or impatience is a betrayal of his trust. The old-fashioned evangelism of my youth, the periodic mission that aimed to stimulate the sluggish life of a parish, is out of date. We are doubtful of its methods. Religion is not a hothouse plant that may be forced; and the feverish atmosphere of the inquiry-room was more favourable to precocity than to permanence. We are content to want its artificial aid, relying solely on great spiritual forces which, whether slow and silent or swift and stormy in their operation, are always deep and lasting in their results. Yet let me remind you that the patience for which I plead is other than indifference or passivity. It is the whole being in intense and sustained effort toward an end which, if it is distant, is yet divinely sure.

4. *Unworldliness*.—Here we must distinguish; for there is an unworldliness which does not commend the Gospel. It is deplorable that so many good men fail for lack of common sense and ordinary prudence. They do not know how to manage their own affairs, living beyond their income and sinking helplessly into debt. Or they are deficient in method, never answering letters or keeping engagements, disregarding the common courtesies of life and ignoring the peculiarities and prejudices of their fellow-workers. For such faults no gifts

or graces will atone. A little worldly wisdom is a valuable asset even in spiritual work. But, however wisely thoughtful of details, a minister must never lose sight of principles. His feet may be on earth; his head and heart should be in heaven. He must make men feel that his aims, motives, and resources are unworldly. If he worries himself over finance, or exhausts himself in organizing a parish; if there is no hint of a reserve of power, none of the radiance which lights up the mountain top, caught from rising suns which as yet we cannot see, how shall he waken desire or kindle hope in other hearts? Better than a score of sermons about heaven is the sight of a man who this morning looked God in the face. Those are great words of our Lord's spoken to His apostles: "They are not of the world, even as I am, not of the world."¹ May they be true of us.

5. *Zeal*.—In this holy warfare there is no discharge; like our Master, we must never be off duty. Paul's motto was: "Day and night with many tears."² The fisherman casts his nets by night, that he may catch fish. The shepherd cannot sleep when the storm howls round his cottage, for thinking of his sheep. The doctor, comfortably a-bed after a long day's round, never hesitates to issue out, if a sick child needs his help. Is there no rebuke to us there? Are we not put to shame by the eagerness with which men push their wares and press their suits, clinging to a last chance? Think of the diligence with which others ply the black arts by which they seek to entangle souls, and contrast with it the indifferent management on our part of powers entrusted

¹ John xvii. 14.

² Acts xx. 31.

to us for their salvation. It was said of one that he gathered souls as a farmer gathers sheaves when the glass is falling and the sky black with clouds. Short is the day for toil, but long will be the night for rest, and bright the morning of eternity for the faithful labourer.

There is one point on which I would touch before I close ; the duration of a Pastorate. Now the advantages of a brief pastorate are as manifest as are its drawbacks ; and I do not mean to argue the case, for or against. Careful inquiry has led us to conclude that there is no alternative between the three-years' pastorate of the Methodist Church, followed by a "General Post," and our own system of life-appointments with the remote chance of a transfer to some other sphere. You will never, I hope, degenerate into that most contemptible of all creatures, the minister who is always on the look-out for a call, applying for every vacancy as it occurs, writing letters which testify to his remarkable gifts and the great success which has attended his labours, omitting only to indicate why, with such a reputation and such a record, he desires a change. If we are to believe some men, the Pillar of Cloud is always on the move. Make the most of the sphere where Providence has placed you ; plough deep, and you will seldom have to complain of a thankless soil. Yet I can believe that you look forward, not without trepidation. You see yourself growing old, outliving your powers, your influence, the friends of your youth, yet unable to secure the change of sphere which, you fondly believe, would mean a new lease of life. Should it ever be so

with you, may I suggest the following more cheerful considerations? In the first place, if you are a good and faithful minister, you will find that you may outlive many things, but never the welcome given you by your people. Rather, as the years go by, they will surprise and embarrass you with repeated proofs not indeed of your growing efficiency, but of their unabated loyalty and boundless tolerance. This is one of the humbling but happy features of ministerial life. Again, while it is inevitable that your activities should be circumscribed by time, while you cannot always be as fleet as you once were to race through the parish and knock at every door, you will find a welcome compensation for narrowing limitations in the richer experience which years bring. The influence of a good man is like the taste of good wine or the tone of a good instrument: it mellows with age. The few words spoken by an old minister may go farther than the more voluble and vigorous utterances of one who is still a stranger to his hearers. And once again, if you maintain the habits formed here, reading widely and keeping yourself in touch with current thought, you will discover that there is a spring of youth at the world's heart which never dries up, of which whoso drinks may grow old in years and still be young in spirit. Under these conditions, work need never lose its charm nor, perhaps, your ministry its freshness.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MINISTER IN HIS STUDY

GENTLEMEN, when you complete your studies in this place, and go forth from these ancient walls with certificates, diplomas, and an armful of prizes, you must not allow yourselves to think that your student days are over. You have been sowing here, what hereafter you must reap. You have been marking out broad pathways through the realm of truth along which, henceforth and to life's end, you must proceed. You may never attain to the dignity of the scholar ; every one of you may resolve to form the tastes and live the life of the student who is, as Fichte puts it, a scholar in the making.

In early days the Church was the guardian and foster-mother of true learning. Read the life of Origen. Note the inquiring disposition that marked him from childhood, the rapid progress made in the schools of Alexandria which enabled him, on the death of his father, to maintain himself as a teacher of Rhetoric, and secured him, while still a youth, the succession to Clement as president of the Catechetical School. We are told that he sold a fine library, acquired by years of patient toil, for a small daily pension, that he might devote himself without distraction to the higher branches

of learning. The sympathy, the wide outlook, of the true scholar, is evinced by the fact that, while teaching others, he enrolled himself as a pupil of Ammonius, the philosophic porter, so as to be in touch with the young life and fresh thought of a pagan city. His life was abstemious; his fare the simplest. He never drank wine. He went threadbare and shoeless through the city streets with no ornament but his learning. Thus were laid the foundations of Biblical Criticism in the great work which bears his name, and of which Canon Driver says: "It is still indispensable to an Old Testament student." The splendid library of Alexandria was long ago committed to the flames; the Serapion and other famous buildings are sunk into ruins; but the fame of the young scholar has proved imperishable. Origen is the true Pharos, Light-bearer of the East.

In our own Church, the ideal of a "laborious and painful ministry" has always been cherished. Take, *e.g.*, Thomas Boston, the faithful pastor and earnest preacher, first at Simprin and then at Ettrick. A divided Church, a disaffected parish, wild storms that swept down the valley and peaceful Communion seasons when the people, for very multitude, camped out on the hillside; domestic sorrows and sore bodily suffering: these were the factors that made up the changeful current of his life. But his interest in learning never abated. The light must have burned late in Ettrick manse, for the minister was no ordinary worker. He notes the day when he began the study of French and the progress he is making in it; and again the day when first he came into possession of a complete Hebrew Bible.

Hebrew was his "darling study." Years were spent in the elaboration of a new theory of Hebrew accents ; and the preparation of it for the press divided his attention with the correction of proof-sheets of the *Fourfold State*. The white days in his life were marked by the advent of parcels of books. Sometimes the books were lost, and he mourns not so much over their loss as over a worldly heart which had built too bravely on the prospect of them. Then, again, they were found, and he welcomes them with chastened delight as a gift from God, twice given.

Nor is our own age without such devotion to learning as may well shame us. In the *Memorials of his Father*, published by Sir W. R. Nicoll, we have an admirable picture of the student minister. Take this description of a winter evening in a Scottish manse: "My father would sit on one side of the little table and I on the other, with the naphtha lamp between us, each diligently scanning the page, while outside the strath lay locked in snow and the wind was piling up the drift. At nine precisely each night we parted and went to bed, hardly ever without a smile or a laugh." The idea that the habits of a student are inconsistent with the discharge of the practical duties of the ministry or the evangelical fervour which we rightly seek there, is abundantly disproved by the fact that William Burns, perhaps the greatest evangelist the Church of Scotland has produced, was an excellent scholar. During the exhausting labours entailed by the revival of 1859, he found his one recreation in a re-perusal of the Classics. I think I have heard Horace named as a special favourite.

When I go to visit a manse, there is one room I insist on seeing. It may be small, with space only for a table and chair and a few necessary books ; it may attain the dimensions and dignity of a library, with stately shelves well lined with the best authors. Either way, it is the hearth of the house, the furnace-room where the fires of imagination are kindled and power generated which moves the machinery of the minister's life. It may not be possible to secure the best room or the brightest outlook ; but it is well to make the study as attractive as moderate means and other claims allow. Some colour there should be ; one or two good prints, and the photographs of some of the great masters of our craft. Surroundings affect the mind in a subtle way and create an atmosphere which, according as it is gay or gloomy, is certain to colour our work. The hours spent in the study must be strictly guarded, as men guard a citadel which has foes not only at the gates but within its walls. It is easy to exclude visitors, not so easy to extrude wandering thoughts. To read is not to study. You may turn the leaves of a book and rise from its perusal with a vacant mind. It is, therefore, well to mark as you read, and to make a digest of each chapter, adding such comments or queries as may suggest themselves. To master a single verse of the Hebrew Bible with Gesenius and Kautsch at your elbow, or a short paragraph of the Roman Epistle with Sanday and Headlam as your guides, is not much ; yet to do so much each day means a great deal done in a year. At least it will save your self-respect. Concentration is a habit difficult to form, but invaluable when

acquired. Continuity in reading must also be kept in view. The perusal of a dozen volumes may only dissipate the mind ; whereas to devote a whole winter to Gibbon or Grote, to Dorner or Martensen, means the addition of another province to your mental realm, the formation of another centre round which your more discursive reading may gather. A comprehensive outlook will come later. The days are gone when a science could be isolated and studied apart ; the solidarity of knowledge is a fact with which you have to reckon. To-day theology merges imperceptibly into philosophy. Psychology and physiology are hardly to be distinguished. Textual criticism of a book, Isaiah or Jeremiah, is futile unless you know something of the age in which the author lived. I have no wish to hold up to you an impossible ideal of encyclopædic knowledge, but rather to brace you for a quest of which it is true that, if the final goal is beyond the reach of any, each stage in the journey brings with it its own reward.

Your studies should have a bearing on the practical work of the ministry ; and this aim will help to define their course.

You will begin with the study of words, which are the weapons you will have to use. Teachers differ as authors do ; and their rank depends largely on their mastery of words, the wealth or poverty of their vocabulary. This is no arbitrary test. You cannot think without words ; and thought must remain vague and ill-defined if you have not at your disposal terms to express and conserve its finer shades and more delicate

suggestions. If you convey thought by the use of terms inadequate and inappropriate, you may create a false impression. How many of the great controversies of the past have been due to the misuse, or misunderstanding, of words ! Further, speech is meant not only to convey but to commend our thoughts. Now the noblest ideals, if stated baldly in frigid and colourless terms, will fail to impress, whereas, if clothed in picturesque and vivid language, they will charm and inspire. You must learn to differentiate between opposites and contraries ; to speak, on the one hand, of the arrogance of philosophy, and on the other hand, of the presumption of youth ; of " hating " a cruel word while you " loathe " a mean and cowardly action ; of " resenting " a personal injury while you " abhor " a devilish suggestion and " detest " an impious or wicked man.¹ You will find an illustration of what I mean by the study of words in a note by Coleridge in his *Aids to Reflection*, on the word " symbolic " : " *i.e.*, a sign included in the idea which it represents, an actual part chosen to represent the whole, as a lip with the chin prominent is the symbol of a man " (p. 173). Contrast the symbolic as thus defined with the emblematic or allegoric, and you will find yourself on one of the high roads of theological thought. We sometimes speak of " the inevitable word." That is the one word you must learn to shun. What is inevitable you may safely leave the reader to supply for himself. On the other hand, we have all felt the pleasurable thrill excited by the occurrence of some choice phrase or the redemption of a familiar word from

¹ Trench's *Study of Words* for justification of the above.

its vulgar to its proper, or it may be to some higher, use. There is room here for a simplicity which may be exquisite. Greatly daring, you may greatly excel.

The study of words will lead to that of style—a more complex and difficult matter. Thirty years ago it was the first article in the creed of a Divinity student that, if he had anything to say, it mattered little how he said it. On the contrary, it matters much. Some of our ablest men—men of profound learning—remain in obscurity, lacking the power of easy and attractive exposition; others, with little to say, but saying it brightly and pleasantly, have blossomed into popular preachers. Many have found it wise each day to read a page or two of some good author, so as to keep the ear, like a fine musical instrument, in perfect tune. Others have endeavoured to model their own style on that of one or other of our great writers; but that is scarcely to be recommended. It is a joy to read Hooker or Milton or Burke; it is at your peril you attempt to copy them. David, in Saul's armour, stumbling across the tent with greaves of brass on his youthful limbs and a king's spear in his hand, moves us to laughter; with a sling and a few smooth stones from the brook, he can face the giant and slay him. The study of formal treatises on rhetoric, by Blair or Whately, is apt to induce affectation. I recommend to you Pater's short but suggestive essay on "Style." Read also R. L. Stevenson's little book, *The Art of Writing*; you will learn there what it cost a man of genius to win the mastery of words. He compares a writer to a conjuror, juggling with two or three oranges which he must keep

going at the same time ; and again, to a weaver at his loom, working his various threads into a stuff which must not only wear well but please the eye. “ Whatever obscurities, intricacies of argument, there be, the neatness of the fabric must not suffer, or the artist is proved unequal to his task. On the other hand, no form of words must be selected, no knot tied among the phrases, unless knot and word be precisely what is wanted to forward the argument ; to fail here, is to swindle in the game.”

If manners make the man, which is doubtful, certainly it is the man that makes the style, if it is good. There is something vital here ; and, as each seed unfolds and flowers after its kind, so each mind should express itself in the style natural and proper to it. You must think clearly ; for light and order are the parents of beauty and strength. You must feel deeply ; for feeling is the furnace in which the thought-stuff, precious gold or iron ore, becomes molten and malleable. Above all, you must know what you mean to do, and work accordingly. If you are speaking to children, simplicity should be your aim. A mothers’ meeting calls for sympathy. Working-men will respond to a more vigorous and virile appeal. If it should ever be your splendid doom to address an audience of Divinity students, I scarcely know what combination of opposite qualities will fit you for the task ! At the same time, you must remember that style is an art, in which practice alone makes perfect. To one who inquired as to the secret of his brilliant execution, Rubenstein replied : “ Six hours a day over a single note, till you can strike it with absolute purity and

precision." So it is in writing or speaking. The constant use of words, while you weigh each one well, carefully selecting the more, in preference to the less, fit for your purpose, skilfully combining them so as to convey the maximum of pleasure and profit with the minimum of effort to your readers or hearers: this in time will bring you at least within sight of your goal. To write each day a little, to write and rewrite a paragraph till you at least cannot improve it, to efface, insert, adjust: this is the only way to secure that facility combined with felicity of speech at which you aim.

The study of Style will lead you still farther, to that of Literature, Imaginative, Narrative, or Scientific. Here, no doubt, your own taste will be your best guide; but a wide outlook is to be recommended.

Of the current novel I know little, and do not care to know more. Erotic and hysteric, it has little to teach us and may be left severely aside. But the great novelists are among our best teachers. A good novel is no other than a sermon, the more impressive and memorable because it invests abstract truth with the passion and pathos of actual life. How many a text you may find as you read through George Eliot's *Romola*! "The repentance that casts off all moorings to evil demands something more than slavish fear." "Duty can have no inward constraining power, unless it is wedded to some form of believing love." "Our deeds are like the children born to us; they live and act apart from our own will. Children may be strangled; deeds never. They have an indestructible life both in and out of consciousness." Is Saul also among the prophets? We

welcome with acclaim the latest addition to imaginative literature by Mr. Wells. A brilliant style, a subtle reflection of the varying moods through which many have passed since the war began, the emergence of a brave strong soul into a new world of religious thought and feeling, make it in the highest degree interesting and remarkable.¹

Poetry is a field you will do well to cultivate. Do not merely wander there, like Proserpine in the fair fields of Enna, to gather flowers, lest you share her gloomy fate. Study the poets, drinking deep of the Castalian spring which underlies their world of beauty. It has still the power to confer on elect souls, as once on Hadrian, the empire of the world. Putting Shakespeare aside for obvious reasons, one may name Spenser, Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning. Take the "House of Pride" and that of "Holiness," the creation of Spenser's genius; study them carefully and choose between them as your own abode. Learn in Milton's "Comus" to admire a virtue that

"could see to do what virtue would,
By her own light, though sun and moon
Were in the flat sea sunk."

With Wordsworth you may tune your mind to the Biblical solemnity that overshadows, and the penetrative pathos that pervades, the pastoral world—a world of simple tastes and vivid passions of which he first raised the image. Tennyson is not yet out of date. His "Palace of Art" and that weird "Dance of Death" over which he sees God's judgment breaking, an awful

¹ *Mr. Britling Sees it Through.*

rose of dawn, will suggest much to your heart. I still remember after thirty years my first introduction to Browning, of whom I have been, ever since, a humble and grateful student. I recall the fine figure in his "Christmas Eve," used to suggest the fragmentariness of human achievements—the figure of a sculptor who, despairing of a consummate colossus, uses up his whole block of marble in creating a head, trusting some other to begin with the foot and work upwards, so to complete a whole. I recall too the magnificent description in "Paracelsus" of the creative process ending in man, in whom nature becomes conscious of herself :

"The winds
Are henceforth voices, wailing or a shout ;
A querulous mutter or a quick gay laugh ;
Never a senseless gust, now man is born" ;

and that unforgettable close to the monologue of the aged pontiff, revealing, as with a flash of lightning, all the possibilities of good, of repentance and redemption, which life holds to the very last.¹ These are only specimens of the contributions made, and the bias given, to theological thought in our own day by a single writer.

I must confess to an almost childish delight in a good biography, from *Plutarch's Lives* to Morley's *Gladstone*. I shelter myself behind the great name of Professor James, who, in his *Varieties*, has shown that such reading may be put to excellent account in the elucidation of the laws of the religious life. And history is biography writ large. It records the growth, development, and maturity of the common consciousness of mankind.

¹ "The Ring and the Book,"

Here Carlyle teaches us to distinguish the artist from the mere artisan, the man who labours much in a narrow space, having no eye for the whole, ignorant that the part is to be discerned only in the whole. History enables you to bring the experience of long ages and great races to bear on the problems, duties, and facts of your own daily life. To read Gibbon's *Decline* is to realize how easy it is to miss the inwardness of a great religious movement. To read Green on Puritan England is to treat with a lofty disdain the innuendoes levelled at the Nonconformist conscience of to-day. To read Lindsay on *The Reformation* is to meet with placid equanimity the friction of thought and feeling in your own parish.

Scientific Literature, particularly Moral Science, demands attention. The appearance of a new book like Bergson's *Creative Evolution* must not pass unnoticed by the student. You may not accept its conclusions ; you may feel how far it falls short of the ultimate solution of the problems raised ; yet it gives them a new setting, and advances us another stage toward the goal. But current literature must not displace the great books of the past. Plato underlies John and Paul. Nor has the Christian view of the world ever received a nobler expression than in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. And if we are not Grecians, if our French and German halt, though we know nothing of the sweetest of European tongues, there are translations at our service. Emerson roundly protests that he never wastes time over the original in a foreign language, if he can lay hands on a good translation. "What is good in any book is translatable—any real insight or broadly human sentiment." Perhaps

few of us will agree with him there. If a translation is a ferry, the author translated pays heavy toll, and reaches the other side sadly impoverished in the transit. The music of his words, the *êthos* of his work, is untranslatable. Still, failing of the best, we may gratefully accept, and use with diligence, the second best that is within our reach.

All this is, of course, introductory. Theology is the Queen of the Sciences, carrying at her girdle the key to the great problems of life. The Revelation of God in human history is the noblest of all studies ; and to this you have devoted your lives. Much of your time must be spent in meeting immediate demands, and, when two sermons, one lecture, and a Bible lesson have been prepared, it might well seem as if little time were left for more. But you must endeavour, though it be with difficulty, to carry on a line of study apart from pulpit preparation. Select some department of theological thought, some period of Church history, and specialize there ; make yourself master of the literature that has gathered round it. Such reading is the best safeguard against the dissipation of your mental powers. To begin the study of a great writer like Origen, Augustine, or Luther, is to beach your boat on a new continent, and to discover that for a student the possibilities of life are infinite. Intellectual stagnation, orthodoxy at a standstill, is, as I have already said, the bane of our profession. Above all, do not overlook the great text-book : study your Bible. But of that I shall have more to say in a subsequent lecture.

When in your study, sometimes recall Luther's great

saying : " Bene orasse est bene studuisse." How often one finds it so. Closed doors, whose lock no ingenuity could pick, open of themselves while you pray. God's good angel may withhold his name, but scarcely his blessing, from the earnest suppliant. Let me quote the words of Thomas Halyburton, quondam Professor of Divinity in St. Andrews : " Much study, much prayer, temptations also and distinct deliverances from temptation, are useful helps. I was fond enough of my books ; but I must say, in the course of my ministry what the Lord let me see of my evil heart and what was necessary against it was more useful than all my books." So Archbishop Leighton, a scholar as well as a saint, pointing to his books one day, said to his nephew : " One devout thought is worth them all." Let your study be your oratory ; above all arts, strive to excel in that of prayer.

As you grow older, you will have less time for study. You will be called from your books, a course of reading will be interrupted ; scarcely will time be left you to pray. It is in the first ten years of your ministry you must amass capital on which, for the rest of a long lifetime, you may have to draw, not without a sense of shame. " Youth is the age of newly developed powers. Everywhere there are impulses and principles destined to burst forth into new creations. To see youth slothful, is the sight of winter in the time of spring—the blight and withering of a newly-opened flower." ¹ Keep, therefore, an open mind. Think fearlessly and with reverence. Be on friendly terms with the best ; they only concern you, and they are always within reach.

¹ *Fichte's Lectures.*

Above all, be true to yourselves. "It is doubtless of all things most ignoble when a man out of compliance (which is at bottom cowardice and want of spirit) or out of indolence (which prevents him from thinking for himself and drawing the principles of conduct from his own mind) gives himself up to others and relies on them rather than on himself. Such an one has indeed no self within him, and believes in no self, but goes as a suppliant to others and entreats them to lend him their personality. How can such an one regard himself as honourable or holy, when he neither knows nor regards his own being?"¹

Here is Clement's description of the true Gnostic, the Christian scholar: "He is freed by the knowledge of God from lower earthly passions, and all that could disturb his equanimity, the placid even current of his soul. Knowing God, he knows no fear; what is there for him to fear who is persuaded of the love of God? Nor does he fail in cheerfulness; nor is he angry, nor can he envy. He loves every creature, and with no merely natural affection, but in and for the Highest, as one with him in Christ. What need is there of fortitude, when he is never in danger, who dwells in God, inseparable from the object of his love? What need of self-restraint, when all his desires are turned toward those things which one may desire always and with the whole heart? Day and night, sleeping and waking, he does all to the glory of God. Prudent and pointed in his habits, he is miserly of his time and holds himself defrauded of every moment that is not given to God. He never surrenders to the rabble that reigns supreme in the theatre, nor admits

¹ *Fichte's Lectures.*

even to his dreams a thought that would entice him to forbidden pleasure. Decorous in conduct, composed in mien, he fixes his regard on the fairest models—patriarchs, prophets, apostles, angels ; above all, on Christ. He desires everything on earth that is good, yet so as to cling to none, being already possessed in Christ of what is best. All days to him are good, and every wind blows blessing, as coming from God. Just as St. Peter, when he saw his wife led out to die, rejoiced on her behalf and, addressing her by name, bade her ‘ Remember now the Lord ’ ; such is the marriage of the saints,” earth’s great bridals, “ and such their dispositions to those who are dearest to them.” ¹

¹ *Stomata.*

CHAPTER IX

THE MINISTER IN THE PULPIT

ALL we have hitherto said as to the providential disposition of life, interpreted as a call to the ministry, of the relation between the pastor and his people, of their dependence on him and his manifold obligation to them, of his study and the golden hours spent there in meditation and prayer ; all this points beyond itself. The Christian minister in one respect is a Jew ; his week ends where that of others begins. The other days mount slowly ; and, as they mount, he bends under the growing burden of his work, till Sunday comes and crowns him once more with its kind release. The week is a seed-plot whose harvest is gathered in during those brief hours when he faces his people and speaks to them the message given him. Above all things, he is to be a preacher of Christ's Gospel ; all he is, and knows, and does, must tend in that direction. This is our subject to-day.

Let me begin with a few words about the conduct of Public Worship. There are two ideals between which you have to choose. According to the one, hymns and lessons are to be selected, prayers thought out, the text chosen, the sermon conceived, so as to give expression to a single thought which dominates the whole service. The ideal, in this case is that of unity. The cumulative

force, the resultant impression, may be great. On occasion of any of the Church festivals, or under conditions of common interest, *e.g.* on occasion of a national fast or thanksgiving, this method will naturally be followed. The other ideal is that of comprehension. According to it, each service is thought out and carried through, so as to include the various phases of the Christian life, and to meet the manifold needs of a miscellaneous congregation. Adoration, confession, thanksgiving, intercession find a voice, sickness and health, joy and sorrow, youth and age, a place here. The opening hymn may be "Holy, holy, holy"; Psalm xxiii. gives thanks; the *Te Deum* utters the faith common to all; while a hymn of invocation to the Holy Ghost, or in praise of the risen Saviour, naturally follows. The lessons are chosen in sequence, so that a whole book, with needful omissions, may be read through. Then comes the sermon, dealing with a particular aspect of the Christian life, and the service closes with a hymn suited to the sermon. In this way the congregation is protected against the excessive subjectivity of the preacher; and within the hospitality of a single service, thus generously conceived, every worshipper finds a welcome and a home. There is a further technical advantage in this method, not to be overlooked. When the psalms and hymns and lessons are thus chosen beforehand, the choir are able to prepare for the service of praise, and the Reader, if there be one, to familiarize himself with the Scripture for the day. Under ordinary conditions, this is the better method of conducting a service; while the former, as I have indicated, may be reserved for special occasions.

The conduct of Public Prayer calls for careful attention. In every act of united worship, it is proper at once to lift our hearts to God, to fill the mind and kindle the imagination with the thought of His greatness and glory, as Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer of His people. It is equally proper to dwell on the Person and work of Christ, our great High Priest, in whose name and in whose very words we are taught to pray, and on the presence and power of the Holy Ghost as the bond of union between us. This is the distinctively Christian element in prayer, and calls for careful preparation, from which we must not shrink. Your best help here will be the Book of Psalms. The Hebrews were a priestly race, and it is by their experience that men everywhere have been led nearest to God. The *Manual of Devotion* by St. Augustine should be carefully studied. It is full of rich warm thought and glowing expression. Bishop Andrewes' *Book of Private Prayers* is a treasure-house to all who know it. What could be sweeter than his morning prayer :

“An angel of peace, a faithful guide,
A guardian of our souls and bodies,
Tarrying round about me,
And suggesting to me always what things are wholesome ;
Let us ask of the Lord.”

Or how can penitence be more fitly expressed than thus :

“Oh Thou, my Saviour Christ, Christ my Saviour,
Saviour of sinners of whom I am chief,
Despise me not,
The price of Thy Blood,
Thy namesake despise not,
Despise me not, O Lord.”

Study the effect produced on the mind here by words repeated either simply, or in inverted order, or in ascending scale. There are many later books, smelling somewhat of the lamp, which are still worthy of notice—not forgetting the brief prayers by R. L. Stevenson, which are models of their kind.

In my own Church, there is a growing tendency toward liturgical forms. This may be defended. History repeats itself. Life, from day to day and year to year, winds its well-worn way, and it seems inevitable that we drift into certain forms of prayer, more or less fixed in respect of order and expression. It is as natural for prayer, as it is for a river, to keep its course. Thus in the prayer of intercession, the individual, the family, the Church, the nation form a sequence which it is hardly wise to break merely to secure variety. On the other hand, I think we must carefully guard against a surrender to liturgical forms, whether made for ourselves or borrowed from others. Prayer is the offering of the heart's desire, and the freshness and freedom of a petition which springs from a sense of present need, the language of a heart touched by the joy or sorrow of the hour, can find no substitute in the stateliest of ancient forms. It is our business to cultivate the spirit of prayer in our people; and simplicity and freedom are not easily combined with formality and state. If we accustom them to the use of forms, it must be only as helps to be outgrown, as a lame man uses a crutch till his limbs regain their natural vigour. Decency and even dignity may still be combined with freedom in prayer, but to achieve this we must live the life of prayer. I have heard men

in the pulpit manifestly more concerned to fight their own foes and grope their own way to God, than to lead others to Him. The note of confidence was lacking. There was no suggestion of an open door or a shining face with its welcome waiting us. We cannot lift others higher or nearer than we ourselves have come. Abraham drew near to God before he prayed for Lot and Sodom. On the Day of Atonement the high priest's first duty was to shrive his own soul by repeated lustrations and offerings ; only then was he ready to minister to the needs of the people. No man, I take it, who has a prayerful spirit, will need much extraneous help in talking to God with or for others. And, if your hearts are full and your lips touched, some of the happiest moments in life will be those when you lead your people by the new and living way to the throne of grace.

And now I come to the sermon. I shall not waste your time over the question of extemporaneous preaching. There may be occasions when you are called to address a congregation unexpectedly and without preparation. Only practice can give you facility then. And surely, just then, you may fall back on the precept and the promise of the Master : " Take no thought, for it shall be given you." But no man, worthy of his office, will habitually or deliberately go to the pulpit and speak words he has not premeditated. Respect for the intelligence of his audience, not to say for the commission under which he acts, forbids it. You will prepare to preach ; and a week is not too long to spend on preparation for a duty so solemn. I do not mean that you should spend your whole week in writing sermons

I mean that the work of preparation should not be pushed into a corner or left to the last moment. I knew a man of whom it was said that, after a week spent in miscellaneous reading, he would sit up all Saturday night writing sermons, going straight from his desk to the pulpit, and sometimes leaving the candle burning behind him in the manse. He paid the penalty in a nervous breakdown ; nor, gifted and charming as he was, can I believe that his people got the best out of him which they had a right to expect. Early in the week select your text. Spend an hour, if possible, on Monday evening, mapping it out. Then lay it aside, returning to it from time to time. Let it germinate in your mind, like a seed in the soil. Brood over it, till you feel it flutter like a live thing within you. By Thursday or Friday you will be in a position to survey the material that has gathered round it, and set all in order for use. I take for granted that you will write at least one sermon in the week. Writing makes an exact man ; and the questions you deal with require not fulness only but exactness in statement. When you have written, you will revise and possibly recast. Paragraphs will be struck out as irrelevant ; sentences that are ambiguous will be reconstructed ; words less fit exchanged for others more so. You cannot be too laborious here. If an artist like Millais painted the face of the Nun in his " Garden of Rest " nine times before he was satisfied with it, if Brougham wrote and rewrote his speech in defence of Queen Caroline fourteen times, you have no right to rest content with a first blundering attempt. Often it is the finishing touch that makes

the difference between failure and success, lifting the commonplace to the level of excellence.

But if you are to write—what then? Is the sermon to be read or spoken? I speak with reserve, knowing how much is involved. If you mean to read, you will write what will bear to be read. Your style will become pregnant and condensed—tending perhaps to involution, to “the long-contending victoriously intricate sentence.” There is a charm in such a style; and for some men it may be the best. One cannot think of Newman as not reading his great sermon on the “Parting of Friends,” or the “Development of Doctrine.” You too may read, if you have a University audience to preach to, particularly if you have a voice like his, penetrating and vibrant, and are, like Thomas Chalmers, “a fell reader.” But after all, the preacher is not a writer nor a reader, but a speaker; and it is the whole man that speaks. Much is lost when eye and hand are glued to the desk. Even the turning of a leaf may interrupt the currents of sympathy between the pulpit and the pew. Let me here recall an honoured teacher of my youth, the late Principal Rainy. As a boy, I heard him preach. The sermon, which was closely read, was subtle and suggestive as he could make it. There were no points one could seize on, but warmth and light and beauty pervading all, an atmosphere through which you saw, or rather felt and shared, the growth and development of the thought; a new world into which you felt yourself expanding under the magic of a great preacher. I can still recall the thrill with which I sat and listened. Later in life, with a noble

disregard of reputation, he flung aside the paper and spoke often with hesitation, always simply, to his audience. In the judgment of many, he lost caste as a preacher. And yet, in the last sermon I heard him preach, as he opened the General Assembly of 1904 ere he left to die in a far land, there was a pathos and a dignity, an elevation of thought and style, which I have never heard surpassed; one was not so much excited as subdued.

If you are to speak, the question still remains, how? Some men write a sermon and then commit it to memory. When they have announced the text they fix their eye on vacancy and recite their lesson. Manifestly they are reading from an invisible book, the pages of which they turn with an invisible hand. You feel certain that, if you could divert the preacher's eye for a moment, the stream of speech would be cut off. This is, of all kinds of delivery, the worst; yet it may lead to something better than itself. I give you my own experience for what it is worth. I began my ministry as assistant or curate to a gentleman of the old school. He never wrote a line, but kept a slate by the side of the arm-chair in which he spent his days, and noted down from time to time the results of his thinking. On Sunday—a stately figure with black skull-cap and white locks escaping over his shoulders—he stood among his people and talked to them as a father to his children. One Sunday I preached. The Bishop was there, and his brother, a physician of eminence and a man of fine taste. After supper they took me in hand, assuring me that, if I had any desire to succeed as a preacher, I must

learn to do without my paper. I replied that, as that was impossible, I must be content to fail. They persisted: Try. I did try, again and again, on occasions when my audience was scanty and simple. I wrote out and learned by heart. I remember dreadful moments when, in the full tide of my eloquence, I lost the thread of thought; my mind became a blank. I had either to pull out and consult my paper—always an undignified proceeding—or to flounder on till connection was re-established and the light of reason dawned once more on the darkness and chaos within. That stage is long since passed. I prepare carefully, writing and rewriting as I have advised; and I find that when I spend a week over a subject, planning it out, reducing it to form, weighing well each word, I do not need to memorize at all. The subject has possession of me, and thinks itself through me. If I am in good physical condition, the process is easy and delightful. In this way I achieve what is, for me, the modest maximum of excellence, with a certain freedom and fervour for which I have to thank the friendly and responsive faces ranged before me. It is more difficult to preach thus among strangers; and if you are physically under par, you run the risk of a breakdown.

The *delivery* of a sermon is of great importance. Do not despise the study of elocution. If you do, you will rue it by and by, when your people complain that they cannot hear you, that you either shout or whisper, and drop your voice at the end of a sentence just when they are waiting to catch the word. Voice production and, still more, the management of the voice, deserve

careful attention. There are of course some mistakes, vices of the pulpit, against which you will guard yourself. Remember Hamlet's words: "Do not saw the air with your hand—thus! but use it all gently; for in the torrent, tempest, and, if I may say so, the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. . . . Do not be tame neither; but let your discretion be your tutor. Suit your action to the word and the word to the action, with this special observance that you outstrip not the modesty of nature. For this o'erdone or come off tardy, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve, the censure of which one must, in your allowance, outweigh a whole theatre of others." That is good advice for a preacher as well as for a player. The modesty of Nature is the true standard to be observed.¹ George Herbert describes the preacher in his *Temple* thus: "His voice is humble, his words treatable and slow; yet not so slow neither as to let the fervency of the speaker hang and die between his words. But with a grave liveliness, between fear and zeal, pausing yet pursuing, he performs his duty." One of the most effective speakers I have ever heard was the late Professor Drummond. Nature had been kind to him. An erect figure, a graceful bearing, an open and pleasing countenance, roused and riveted attention. The self-restraint of the speaker gave him an easy mastery over his audience. He began quietly and seldom raised his voice. When he wished to emphasize, he spoke with more than his usual deliberation.

¹ Cf. Cowper's: "Through all he said a noble plainness ran."

Men listened to hear ; and thus he secured the stillness even in a crowded building which is the physical equivalent of mental receptivity.

Preaching is of two kinds. First, there is Lecturing. Here, you select a passage of Scripture, a Psalm, a parable, or a portion of a prophecy. Your first duty is with the text. Archaic expressions, ambiguous phrases, obscure literary or historical allusions must be made plain. When the ground has thus been cleared, you proceed to build on it. Your skill as an expositor appears in the directness with which you fasten on the central thought of the passage and make it stand out before your hearers, carefully articulating it, if need be, into the general argument, the chain of which it is a link. Finally, you have to vitalize it, to set it on fire with imagination and passion, so that it shall come as a message straight from Heaven to the hearts of your hearers, bearing directly on their daily life.¹ In lecturing you must learn to respect the limits under which you work. Say what the Scripture says ; do not make it say what you please. Live in the writer's world of thought and feeling, and do not import into it the experience of a later age. Take, *e.g.*, the story of Joseph. It is full of the pathos of human life. Here are boyish ideals, youthful ambitions, the outlook and opportunity of maturer years. Here is a glimpse into a world long since gone, once vital and vivid as our own, with the application of forethought, judgment, and religious

¹ "Ad supernum desiderium inflammare auditores suos nequeunt verba quæ frigidò corde proferuntur, neque enim res quæ in se ipsa non arserit aliud accendit" (Gregory the Great).

principles to great social problems. Here too is a Providence, bringing men face to face with their past. Above all, here is the beauty and soft quiet splendour of a life well spent and crowned with a dawning hope of immortality. Why should we miss all these, and resolve the substantial humanity of the story into mere mist, shadow pictures flung on the screen ; as if Joseph were nothing but a type of Christ ? Preach Christ ; make His birth, death, and resurrection the staple of your preaching. But if you choose an Old Testament text do not strain it beyond all recognition so as to make it the scaffold or skeleton of a Gospel address.

Lecturing is a very fruitful method of preaching—indispensable in a stated ministry, ensuring freshness and variety in the pulpit, and promoting a more thorough study of the Bible as a whole. My own experience is that an average congregation values such preaching and will “face up” to the sustained mental effort it requires with a courage and a patience that are themselves an inspiration to the preacher. They come to church with an edge of expectation on their spirits ; they prepare themselves to hear. Of course, you must not be too detailed or minute in exposition. Study Owen’s eight volumes on the Hebrews, but do not make him your model in the pulpit. Seven sermons on the word “Come,” or a winter spent over the Epistle to Philemon will try the patience of any congregation. There must be rapid movement and conscious advance, if interest is to be maintained. Nor should you determine, on a Friday, to lecture through Genesis or John, and begin the course on the following Sunday. There

should be an interval for preparation. Study the book you select and the literature connected with it before you begin to write. In this way you will have, to start with, that mastery of the field you are to cover which will enable you to pick out the salient points as you move along, and preserve a due proportion in your treatment of it.

The Sermon proper differs from the Lecture in many ways. You select a single verse instead of a section ; you condense your exposition so as to leave more time for the application ; you concentrate on points which lie well within the text, but need not be those which were uppermost in the writer's mind. Most sermons err in attempting too much, covering too much ground, and including too many details. It is not needful to put your whole stock in the window at once ; or to include in a single sermon all the aspects of Christian truth. The question of time presses here. Preachers used to turn the hour-glass without compunction ; we are wiser now. I have listened to a sermon which amply satisfied me, and have been surprised, on consulting my watch, to find that it had occupied less than half an hour in delivery. A quarter of an hour might well suffice the preacher, if every minute were well packed, and no room left for padding. Most of all, we must seek after unity in the sermon. Thus, the introduction should not be an empty flourish of trumpets, but a striking suggestion of the central theme. This again, expanded, defended, and illustrated, in the heart of the discourse, should be enforced and applied in what we may dignify as the peroration. The introduction ought not to be

very long. It is not a palm tree under which you are to sit, admiring the graceful outline of its leaves, but a plank, a diving-board, off which you are to spring *in medias res*. It is otherwise with the application. Here you may fitly enlarge in last lingering words. The skilful preacher, like a wise householder, keeps his best, his aptest illustrations, his most moving appeals, to the end. Lately, in preaching on John iii. 16, having treated the verse (a) as a compendium of evangelical truth, (b) as a missionary charge, and (c) as a message to each of my hearers, I closed by referring to an incident narrated by H. M. Stanley in his famous book, *How I found Livingstone*. He had crossed the ocean and penetrated to the heart of the Dark Continent, where at last he came upon the man he sought. There was Livingstone, gaunt and grizzled, worn to a shadow by long sickness. He had been unable for weeks to taste the coarse food which the natives brought him. "But" (says Mr. Stanley) "I had an excellent cook in my camp, and ere long the doctor was seated at my side enjoying his supper. I watched him emptying plate after plate of hot pancakes, till he turned to me and, in his own brusque way, said: 'Why, sir, you have put new life into me.'"

I scarcely need to point the moral. When Christ finds a man, when the Love of God lights up for him this dark world in which he has been wandering, as really lost as if alone in an African forest—what is the result? He takes his food, does his day's work, enjoys his night's rest, and flings himself into the various interests of life with a zest never known before. Many a time he finds himself looking up into the face of the

unseen friend, and saying : “ Ah, Lord Jesus, Thou hast put new life into me.”

But remember, young preachers err in making extravagant demands on the attention of their hearers ; they undo, by overdoing the impression already made. You may say more, by saying less. Always leave something that the hearer may supply for himself.

A German theologian says : “ A sermon should be *Wahr, Wurdig, Würzig*.” Truth, dignity, and interest should mark it. You must not merely avoid misstatement of facts, but lodge in the hearers’ mind a certain quantum of positive religious truth, thus laying the foundation on which you are to build. You cannot light a fire by striking matches over an empty grate. First find the fuel and lay it with care ; then, a single spark will set the whole ablaze. The humblest of us, when in the pulpit, may aspire to that dignity and elevation which are inherent in the message we deliver. Ruskin says that some pulpits are so magnificently decorated that they dwarf and demean the preacher. It is just as certain that there are sermons so slipshod and off-hand in style that Religion herself is disfigured and disgraced by them. And yet, because it is solemn, a sermon need not be insipid, tasteless as the white of an egg. “ Let your speech be seasoned with salt.” Some people dislike an anecdote and are shy even of an illustration ; as you may judge, I am not one of them. I agree with Emerson that the first virtue of a speaker is to be interesting.

Gentlemen, it is of the utmost importance that we cherish a high ideal of the work to which we are called.

If the pulpit has lost its power, it is because it has been degraded to a platform from which lectures on literary and social subjects are read out, by men who are not always experts in these. Let us take St. Paul as our model. All the deepest instincts of humanity were articulate in him. Years of passionate striving after righteousness had been shadowed by a haunting sense of failure ; he had felt all the terrors of the Law. Then had come to him the great surprise, the Revelation of God in Christ. He speaks of the love of Christ constraining him. Against the dark background of the past, shone out on him the brightness of the Christian hope. " All things," he says, " are of God who hath reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ." That was his conception of the Gospel. He lived in an age when the rostrum and the desk, senate and school, were alike discredited ; men were weary of empty talk. But he never doubted that the message he carried would tell ; for it was the power of God unto salvation. In Christ's name to plead with men ; to wrestle with the powers of darkness for men's souls ; to see them waken, dazed and blinded, as from an evil dream ; to be God's hand to lead them through the gates of the morning into the realm of day : that was the splendid task to which he girded himself.

" Oft when the Word is on me to deliver

Lifts the illusion and the truth lies bare ;

Desert or throng, the city or the river,

Melts in a lucid Paradise of air.

Only like souls I see the folk thereunder,

Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be kings ;

Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,

Sadly contented in a show of things,

Then with a rush the intolerable craving
 Shivers throughout me like a trumpet call ;
 Oh to save these ! to perish for their saving,
 Die for their life, be offered for them all !”

You remember the story of the Roman General who met the vanquished King of Egypt by the Nile, and with the point of his sword described a circle round him in the sand, bidding him choose peace or war with Rome before he crossed that line. So must we essay, however lamely, to deal with men, isolating them, imprisoning them within such a mystic circle, bringing them face to face with God and their own souls in some one moment of time whose issues are eternal. It is the note of authority which must never be wanting, if preaching is to do its work. Who is sufficient for these things ? It is something, even to have tried. A young minister in London said to a friend : “ I love preaching, I long to preach better, I long to preach Christ acceptably to men.” A few weeks later he died. But surely the words I have quoted were an unconscious fulfilment of the desire to which they gave such touching expression, witnessing as they do for Christ that there is joy in His service and power in His word.

Let me, as I close, warn you against one persistent danger in the preacher's life. Mr. Gladstone defined an orator as a man who gives back in floods what he receives in vapour. He confesses that he could not imagine himself speaking with effect, if he were not conscious of a response on the part of his hearers. Now, if you were addressing a political meeting, you might aspire to sit down amid a tumult of applause, or at least with a kindly suggestion on the part of your audience that you had won

their suffrage. Such demonstrations are precluded by the decorum of the sanctuary. You have said your say and, still aglow with the living word, you join the congregation as they disperse. Some one remarks that the weather is wretched, or that the choir were in excellent form to-day, or (with his watch in hand) that the service had lasted five minutes beyond the regulation time. Or perhaps you are met by a stony silence which, in ignorance of the real situation, you interpret as indifference. You go home and eat your heart out with a feeling of utter failure. The most deadly hour in the preacher's week comes with Sunday evening, when he says to himself gloomily (forgetting the source of the quotation): "I stretched out my hands, and no man regarded." Now the one sure prophylactic against the malaria which seizes a preacher on his descent from the pulpit is to commence, conduct, and conclude each service in the spirit of prayer. "Do we persuade men or God?" asks St. Paul. After sermon Mr. M'Cheyne was in the habit of praying: "O Lord, make me hang on Thee, to open their hearts." If we make that prayer our own, the dreadful sense of falling, falling, falling into a bottomless abyss of impotence and despair will yield to quiet confidence. "My word shall not return unto Me void." For the rest, let us remember that the conditions of such a collapse are largely physical. A good meal and a good night's rest revived the drooping spirit of a prophet and prepared him for a glorious Monday morning on the heights of Horeb, breasting the storm and hearkening once more to the still small voice of Love which never fails.

CHAPTER X

THE IDEAL CHURCH

To do justice to our theme, we must take a wider view than we have yet won, not only of the Christian ministry but of the Church herself—her ideal and aims.

THE MINISTRY

(a) *The Deacon*.—In the primitive Church the work of the Deacon was mainly administrative. He distributed to the poor and sick the gifts that were brought by the faithful to the altar. The need for discrimination in such work no doubt suggested certain disciplinary powers which were, from the first, entrusted to him. He was the eye and ear of the Bishop, “carefully giving heed to those who walked disorderly, warning one, exhorting another, threatening a third, but leaving the scoffers entirely to themselves” (*Sources of the Apostolic Canons*). In the Roman and Anglican Churches, the Deacon has become, as Hatch phrases it, “a subordinate officer of public worship.” In Presbyterian Churches he retains more of his original functions, being responsible for the finance of the Church and the prudent distribution of charity, while the fact that the offertory is part of an ordinary service connects him still, and in a prominent

way, with the public worship of the Church. In a sense the work of a Deacon is subordinate, but he must not be allowed on that account to underrate its value. Carlyle says that an army "moves on its belly." Commissariat is the secret of success in a long campaign; and the smooth working, the spiritual prosperity, of a congregation depends largely on her Deacons. I have been a minister for thirty years and have not once had occasion to pry into accounts, to examine a ledger, or to organize a sale of work. With such advantages, I confess that I ought to have been a better minister than I am. As yet, gratitude is the only return I have been able to make.

We must teach our Deacons to remember the origin of their office. "There arose a murmuring in the Church at Jerusalem among the Grecians, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration," *i.e.* the distribution of charity. Now an old lady, widow or wife, whose temporal interests are neglected, feels her honour touched, and may be the source of endless trouble to a congregation. The Church realized the danger and appointed seven men to take the whole matter in hand—men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, with Stephen at their head. How wisely she was guided in her choice appears from the sequel. You may take it as a rule that, if you have Church work to be done which is monotonous and semi-secular, you must set your best men to do it. Inferior men will be demoralized by such a task; a really good man will not only lift it to his own level, he will himself continually rise above it. Stephen, *e.g.*, was full of fervour, a man of apostolic fire, preaching Christ far and near. The spirit of such a man was irresistible.

There was no more murmuring in the Church. The widows took their weekly dole from Stephen's hand as if it had been the Sacrament, and blessed God for it and him. To have such men serving the Church is an inestimable boon. Money-raising and money-spending become a sacred duty, and even "the pots in the Lord's house are holy."

(b) *Elders*.—The office of the Eldership has a long and honourable history. Not only in the Jewish Synagogue but, as we have seen, in the Egyptian priesthood and in the municipal life of Asia Minor, the Presbyter was a prominent figure.¹ In the Christian Church his duties were at first purely governmental—*ad regendum*. At a later period, in the temporary absence of the Chief Pastor due to the extent of many a parish, the Elder began to preach and administer the Sacraments. But from the first he was a busy man. It was his duty to summon the people to public worship, to receive reports from those who visited the sick and poor, and to take in hand the discipline of the congregation. It is maintained by Principal Lindsay, an authority on such a point, that the disciplinary powers of the Presbyters extended even to the Pastor. But I think it is doubtful whether the Greek word (*προνοήσονται*; *Sources of Apost. Canons*, ii.) on which he rests his argument requires or will admit the interpretation he puts upon it. One thing is certain; the Elders were bound to be "kindly disposed" toward the minister; and in this they have seldom failed. To-day, in Episcopal churches, the Priest (Presbyter writ *small*) teaches but hardly rules. In other (Presby-

¹ See note on pp. 52-53.

terian) churches the Elder remains in closer touch with the ordinary membership, teaching and administering the Sacraments only in the absence of the minister.

If you wish to see Presbyterianism at its best you must go into one of her churches on a "Communion Sunday." There is the minister, decently robed, presiding at the Holy Table. Probably he is a young and inexperienced man, with nothing but his office to commend him to your notice. But there, too, are his Elders, held in honour by all. On other Sundays they are dispersed among the congregation; to-day they gather round their minister to support him in his arduous task, like jewels that lend their lustre and value to a crown.¹ With slow and stately steps they move in and out among the people, bearing in their hands the vessels of the sanctuary. I have always found that to know the Elders, the kind of men they are and the spirit that is in them, is to know the congregation too, so subtle and pervasive is their influence. You will do well to cultivate their friendship. They may have little time to spare, sometimes they are silent and reserved; but they are the link between you and your people. To win their confidence, to imbue them with your ideals, is to be master of the field. You will learn much from them as to the needs of the people and often a great deal, as yet unknown to you, about the Christian life. A minister who neglects his Elders is like a general who never consults his staff officers.

(c) *The Ministers*.—They are the lineal descendants of

¹ Cf. "The well-compacted crown of your Presbytery," Ignatius, *ad Magnus*, chap. xiii.

those of whom St. Paul writes to the Thessalonians : " I beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you." Of them I need not say more here.

Deacons, Elders, Ministers ; how are they to work together, being, after all, but men, with human infirmities ? That is, as it always has been, the problem of the Church's life. Let me recall an incident, not without significance. I was sent, with others, to visit the officials of an important London church, to press on them the discharge of a duty to which, it was understood, they were not favourably inclined. We said our say, and adduced our strongest reasons. Then, I well remember, the senior elder spoke out. " Gentlemen," he said, " we have heard you. You have not convinced us ; we are of the same opinion still. But we understand that our minister is in favour of the course you recommend. That is enough for us. Were we ten times more opposed to it than we are, we should still be ready to yield to him. Here, at least, his will is law." Now, it is not every body of men who can yield so gracefully ; and probably few ministers deserve the deference thus shown to my friend. Yet such is the ideal relation between every minister and his elders. After all, he is captain of the ship ; ultimately he is responsible for the working of her. And where there is division of opinion, the last word ought to be with him. He, on the other hand, if he is worthy of his hire, will remember that a minister is the servant, not the master, of his people, and should never, save under pressure of high conviction, oppose the judgment or coerce the

action of those with whom it is his duty and his interest to work in perfect harmony.

THE CHURCH

Such being the threefold ministry which we recognize, let me try to sketch for you the Ideal Church.

1. First of all, it must be a living Church. Now a body lives so long as it has the power of spontaneous action. The Church claims for herself as a whole that freedom of action which she allows to each of her members. I admit that this is not everywhere granted. Legally, the Church is a corporation with a constitution and a charter by which she is bound. She has no right to diverge by a hairsbreadth from what she was at the Reformation or after the Revolution Settlement. The living present is mortgaged by a dead past. This legal view of the Church was enforced some years ago in the case of two great Churches in Scotland which, in obedience to the will of a common Head, came together as one. For this course of conduct, at once brotherly and Christian, they were penalized. A decree of the House of Lords disinherited them of their buildings, churches, and manses, with large funded sums of money. What followed was characteristic of us as a nation. An Act of Parliament was passed which did two things. First of all, it decently recognized the judgment of the House of Lords as final, and then it restored to the United Church the property that had been forfeited. Now a living Church must always claim and, fearless of consequences, must exercise her right to revise her

creeds, to reform her polity, to readjust her methods to the changing needs of the time. No reverence for the past, no respect for any extraneous authority, must restrict the freedom of her action.

Is the Church, then, an incarnation of waywardness and caprice? On the contrary, she is the Body of Christ, and lives only as she is quickened by His Spirit and responsive to His will. And that is a conception of the Church which, if it excludes the possibility of State control, precludes no less that frigid and formal spirit to which too easily she may forfeit her freedom and her life. This is impressed on us by a study of the New Testament. We have seen how soon the passionate devotion with which men regarded the Church as the Bride of Christ died down; how they came to regard her with a distant reverence as "the pillar and foundation of the Truth," steadfast and stately but scarcely sensitive to the breath of life. The same danger confronts her still. Justification by Faith is said to be the article of a standing or falling Church. But the faith which saves is not a creed, but an experience, a life. It is communion with a living Lord, and can be maintained only while it is nourished by the Word and Sacraments of His grace. Apart from the spiritual life of her people, the ideal of the Church as living and therefore free is merely academic.

There is a picture of "Faith" by G. F. Watts, less familiar than his "Hope," but quite as suggestive. She is represented by a female figure of gigantic proportions, seated on a mossy boulder on a hillside. She is richly robed; for Faith has her material equivalent,

her market value. The sword, erewhile drawn for battle, is sheathed and laid across her knees, while she dips her blood-stained foot in a flowing stream. Conflict is only an incident in the Church's history : her birth-right and heritage is peace. Now, lift your eye and note the pose of the great head, bent slightly forward. The lips are parted, the eyes fixed on vacancy, as if she were listening to the voice of one whom as yet she cannot see. Faith dwells among the mists ; truth, steadfast as the mountains, is her throne. But she has converse with the Unseen ; she is all ear and eye for her Lord. The Church lives by her faith ; and faith is love, loyalty—fellowship with Christ.

2. It must be a United Church. In the middle of the third century the Church was confronted for the first time by the peril of schism. She was saved by the commanding genius and Christian spirit of one of her great leaders. In the treatise *De Unitate*, by Cyprian of Carthage, occurs the following famous and beautiful passage : “ There is one Church which outspreads itself into a multitude (of churches), wider and wider in ever-increasing fruitfulness ; just as the sun has many rays but one only light, and a tree many branches yet one only heart, based in the clinging root ; and, while many rills flow off from a single fountain-head, although a multiplicity of waters is seen streaming away in diverse directions from the bounty of its abundant overflow, yet unity is preserved in the head-spring. Pluck a ray away from the body of the sun ! Unity admits no division of light. Break a bough off a tree ! Once broken, it will bud no more. Cut a rill off from the spring ! The rill, cut off,

dries up. So too the Church, flooded with the light of the Lord, flings rays over the whole world. Yet it is one light that diffuses itself everywhere ; the unity of the body knows no partition. She reaches forth her boughs over the universal earth in the richness of her fertility, broadens ever more widely her bounteous flowing rivers, and still there is one head, one source, one mother rich in ever-succeeding births. Of her, we are born ; her milk is our nurture, her breath is our life.”¹ It is easy to detect the genuinely Christian note here ; not so easy, as Cyprian himself found, to be true to it. We lose our hold of Christ and *fall away from one another*. Divided counsels and divergent aims have been a source of weakness in the Church from the earliest times. The lovely peace with which her Lord invested her is ruffled, she herself is disfigured and vulgarized, by envy, anger, and strife. We cannot all think or speak alike ; but surely all might be kept within the limits not only of parliamentary language but of Christian charity.

When the Church was rent asunder over a single ambiguous phrase (*θεοτόκος*), the intervention of a humble Christlike Presbyter, Lampon by name, effected at least a temporary reconciliation. Even the haughty and passionate Nestorius, Patriarch of Antioch, did homage to the might of love. “ Nothing is of more power,” he writes, “ than Christian gentleness. By this man’s might I have been conquered ; for I am seized with great fear, when I perceive in any man the spirit of Christian gentleness ; it is as if God dwelt in him.” The servants of the Lord “ must not strive.”

¹ See Archbishop Benson’s *Life of Cyprian*, p. 182.

But Unity is not merely the absence of strife. As the Body of Christ, the Church is one only in so far as her many members persist in a relation of mutual and practical helpfulness. "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee." Toward this higher ideal of Christian Unity we are only beginning to reach out. In every church there is an amazing variety. Thus you have town and country charges. In the former, the audience may be select, cultured, and wealthy; in the latter, you may have to deal chiefly with plain and poor men. I have been visiting lately among such country charges, and am greatly impressed with their value for the Church's life. I have found myself dropped at a wayside station, and, after a drive of four or five miles, have come to a village where the only building of any importance is the church with its adjoining parsonage or manse. These village churches are sometimes mean in appearance; but on Sunday, when the pews are filled, they brim and bubble over with life. You confront an audience largely of men, whose weather-beaten faces betray the nature of their employ. As you begin your sermon, they lean forward and fix on you an eye that never wanders so long as you convince them that you have a message to deliver. It is there we are breeding the sturdy manhood which, when poured into our great cities, fills our shipyards and warehouses, and which, if imbued with Christian sentiment, furnishes us with our best church workers. Increasingly England is the land of great cities. They spring up, as if by magic, along the coast or at the mouth of a river. They are the concentrated essence, the flower of modern civilization, but their roots are still in the

soil. England can never afford to neglect her rural population.

“ Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
When wealth accumulates and men decay.”

And it is the task of the Church to strengthen the bond between town and country congregations. The strong must go to the help of the weak, and see that the ministry is not only well represented but adequately maintained in rural districts. This is a matter which touches the honour of us ministers, on which therefore we are bound to be sensitive. A minister belongs not to his own congregation or parish, but to the whole Church. He goes where he is sent, and is bound by his ordination vows to seek the peace and prosperity of all. It is a mere accident which sends one to a city charge and a comfortable congregation who take a pride in anticipating his every need, while his friend, a better scholar, a better preacher, and, God knows, a better man, is sent to some upland parish where the conditions, social as well as climatic, are all against him. The least the former can do for his friend and for the Church, their common Mother, is to educate his own people into the duty and privilege of doing all they can to make work for the other easy and effective. I am proud of the spirit of comradeship and sacrifice which is springing up among our younger ministers, some of whom have given up a slice of a salary, not too handsome at the best, that their congregations, already heavily burdened, may do their duty to their poorer brethren. Let me press this matter on your attention. We cannot be apostolic in polity unless we are apostolic in finance.

“They had all things in common.” Of course Christian liberality must be spontaneous; that is the bloom on the grape. The Church has no right to tax or assess. What she is entitled to claim is that there should be a fair proportion between what is spent on local needs and the aid given to central funds. “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” We must bear one another’s burdens; only thus can we fulfil the law of Christ and realize the ideal of a United Church.

3. It must be a Progressive Church. We are forced onwards by the inexorable logic of facts. A Church ceases to live unless, like a tree, she makes new wood and puts forth fresh branches. Thus we are confronted by the insistent problem of Church Extension. In an “old country” like England, there is, of course, a limit to what is possible here. Many districts are already over-churched. It would be folly to plant a new church in one of these because a few families of the Anglican, Methodist, or Presbyterian persuasion have strayed thither. Such new charges often prove a permanent burden to the Church. Even if they prosper, thanks to a popular preacher who filches from other folds, there is no real gain but a dead loss to the Kingdom of God. But in our great cities the population is constantly shifting. A district which fifty years ago was residential is now given over to business, or its social character changes, the few rich giving place to the many poor. See how complex the problem of Church Extension has become, and consider how it is to be solved. Let me suggest:

First of all, where there is no longer need for a church, where offices and warehouses have taken the place of homes, we must not be ashamed, as a Church, to withdraw. Abandon at once a position which is no longer of strategic importance. In the heat of a battle we cannot afford to waste a gun or a man. Old city churches with historic associations must of course be dealt with as a separate and privileged class.

Secondly, when people still gather, plentiful but poor, and therefore unable to maintain a Gospel ministry which yet they need and need more than ever, we must see to it that the need is supplied. Stipends must be provided ; men and money must be poured in. Suburban congregations must take a pride in "floating double" on the tide of life—seeing themselves reflected in some down-town church which has learned to look to them for the means of subsistence. It is hard to say which of the two will gain most by such association—the church that gives or the church that receives help.

Thirdly, when people go elsewhere, we must not be content to follow them lamely, and often too late, as at present. We must go before them and welcome them with an open door. New churches must be built. And, with all deference to art, and earnestly desiring that the ideal of beauty should be restored to its lost place in public worship, I urge that such new churches should be not costly and luxurious, but simple and commodious, as befits a district which in its turn will be derelict and dependent on others. They may easily be attractive at the same time.

But England is not the world ; nor have we done our

duty as the Church of Christ, when she is cared for. The world is our parish. In the near future, the Far East will be at our door. What England is to be in the next century, depends largely on what we are doing to-day for India and China and Japan. A Church which is evangelical in doctrine will always be evangelistic in spirit. And the inverse is true ; a Church which ceases to be evangelistic and missionary in its aims and methods will cease to be evangelical in creed. Every minister should be a missionary at heart. Missionary letters may be trifling ; missionary magazines, sometimes tame ; but to-day the great missionary problems are alive with interest and hope. Nothing is steadying the Church to-day, amid her creedal uncertainties, like the missionary crusade ; nothing else is holding the hearts of her young men and women. Study circles, meetings addressed by veterans from the front, anniversary services for the inculcation of missionary principles—these are all parts of a well-organized Church life. It is not money we have to raise so much as interest ; it is not the size of an audience that counts, so much as the depth of the impression made. The life of James Chalmers of New Guinea shows how much may come of a few words spoken to a handful of children in a Sunday School. You will never regret the time and strength expended on such work. As sympathies open out, faith will strike her roots deeper ; the Gospel will be more to us and to our people as we realize what it is meant to be to the whole world.

4. Lastly, it must be an Enthusiastic Church. I grant you, the phrase is equivocal. Like that other,

mildly satirized by John Foster in his essay on "The Epithet Romantic," it may mean no more than an excess of feeling over the intellectual and practical interests in life. We must guard against that; but the opposite extreme, the cold and critical, is as common and more mischievous. There are men whose blood never leaps, whose imagination never kindles; men with no vision in their eye, no passion in their soul. They tithe mint and anise and cummin with painful precision, but the weightier matters of the law they neglect. The decorum of a service, a minute point of ritual, is more to them than the progress of the Kingdom. In their case, you appeal in vain to the great loyalties of life and the high ideals of our faith. Such men remind us, if I may borrow Foster's figure, of the leafless tree, every branch of which is clearly defined against the wintry sky with nothing of the soft green luxury of foliage to interpose. It is for this luxury of foliage, the exuberance not of shallow excitement but of deep emotion based on strong conviction, that I appeal. You remember the striking phrase in *Ecce Homo*: "No heart is pure that is not passionate, no virtue safe that is not enthusiastic." A passion for righteousness and an enthusiasm for humanity are the only safeguards against the two deadliest evils in our Church life, professionalism in the pulpit and propriety in the pew. We perish as a Church, withering down to our roots, when we are mildly acquiescent in a safe compromise or in social conditions, advantageous to ourselves, which are a disgrace to Christianity. "Surtout point de zèle" is the motto of diplomat and critic. It has no place in the making of the hero, martyr, or saint. "I will very gladly spend and

be spent," says St. Paul, "in your service, though the more abundantly I love you the less I be loved." There speaks the Church. The fire must burn day and night on her altar ; it is by her enthusiasms she lives. Pride in the past is a poor makeshift for loyalty to the present and a lavish devotion to the future of a cause. There is still a place for the joy of battle in the heart of the Church.

And here I venture, still further enlarging on the idea of the Christian ministry, to refer to a class which is often overlooked in this connection. In the early Church each Christian community set apart three women, "one to care for the sick and two to persevere in prayer for all who might be in temptation, and for the reception of revelations when these were necessary." ¹ In some, *e.g.*, Presbyterian churches, the office of the Deaconess has been revived with excellent effect. The office matters little, so long as the work is done. "The poor ye have with you always" ; how shall they be cared for, if not by a woman's gentle hand ? And surely, while the Bridegroom tarries and there is no vision in the night, we need those godly women who, in little groups, will give themselves to this ministry of persistent prayer.

When in Rome, I visited the Forum. I saw the Rostrum from which Cicero delivered his great orations, the Temple of Concord where the Senate met ; altars erected to commemorate famous victories, and the pool where according to tradition, the Heavenly Twins washed their gory steeds on the morning after the battle of Lake Regillus. But more than all these, I saw the Vestal House

¹ *Sources of Apostolic Canons*, pp. 19-21.

where the daughters of Rome kept burning the sacred fires on which depended the life of the Imperial City. There too, I saw that most beautiful work of classic art, the Vestal Mother, which embodies the noble ideal of womanhood that made Rome what she became, the mistress of the world. It is still so with the Church of Christ. She needs great preachers and scholars and administrators. But her hearth is still the home ; and the sacred fires are entrusted to the women of our Church. To train the young to habits of prayer, to reverence for the Bible, to a spirit of sacrifice, to kindle in their hearts a passionate love of Christ and a consuming zeal for His cause and kingdom, this is their high and holy task. We shall not reckon on them in vain.

We are passing through a grave national crisis. A new loyalty, a new sense of responsibility, a new spirit of self-devotion is in the air. Our churches are emptied, our church life and work is harder and duller because our young men have gone to the front. But we shall gain and not lose by their absence, if we learn the lesson they are teaching us so splendidly, that to belong to a kingdom is to be absolutely at the disposal of the King. " Living or dying, we are the Lord's."

PART III.—MAINLY DOCTRINAL

CHAPTER XI

THE BIBLE AS TEXT-BOOK

WE begin to-day the last stage of our journey. Mission and method avail little unless we are well assured of our Message. It is my aim to help you to realize what that Message is. I have no intention of inviting you to reconstruct the Creed ; that would be a task far beyond us. But we believe that truth, while one in substance, is manifold in form ; and that each age must reinterpret the Word of God in terms of its own needs. To study how that may best be done by us, how we may apply to ourselves the heritage of truth handed down by our fathers, this is the high and inspiring task that awaits us. I confess that here, after thirty years, I am still only an apprentice, more conscious of failure than confident of success. If my experience can be of any service to you, I shall be glad. If I fail or seem to fail, if the subjectivity of the medium unduly colour the message, if by omission or mistaken emphasis I imperil the proportion or completeness of the truth, you will deal gently with me as with one who is not a Professor but a humble practitioner, concerned not with the refinements of theological thought but with the burden and battle of daily life. Let me

begin by confessing myself a Christian, a Protestant, and an Evangelical. I have no confidence or hope but in Christ and His cross, no aim or ambition but to bring Him near and make Him real to the hearts of men. And I am as willing to learn as I am to teach.

Our subject to-day is the Bible as Text-Book. In Acts vi. we read : " The apostles gathered the multitude together and said : It is not meet that we leave the Word of God and serve tables." On this, Bengel remarks : "*Non poterant utrumque simul curare ; quare, id quod nobilius est tuentur.*" Or, as Matthew Henry puts it : " They thought this work enough for a whole man, to employ all their thought and time, though one man of them was worth ten of us." The apostolic preaching as outlined in the Acts was effective because it was simple. It was simple in so far as it was elementary, dealing with Gospel facts as interpreted by prophecy and applied to the conscience and heart of men. St. Paul protests to the Ephesian elders at Miletus that he had not shunned to declare to them the whole counsel of God. He does not mean that even his capacious and hospitable mind had grasped the many-sided wisdom and purpose of God, still less that he had succeeded in conveying it to others. He means that he had never hesitated to apply the truth as he knew it to an actual situation ; and in so doing he felt himself to be the messenger of God. There lay his strength. He speaks of the Word of God as the sword of the Spirit, the only offensive weapon in the Christian armoury. A scabbard is of use to guard a sword ; the hilt of the sword may be richly chased and flash with jewels, but it is the naked blade that cuts its way to the bone.

The creeds of Christendom are the scabbard ; gifts of head and heart, setting forth the truth, are the jewels on the hilt. But the Word of God is the sword's self ; and we must learn to use it.

The Bible is the Word of God. Of that we have proof, to quote the words of the Westminster Confession, "in the heavenliness of the matter, the majesty of the style, and the consent of its various parts." If more were needed, confirmation might be found in the universality of its appeal and the permanence of its influence. But the Word of God came not only to men but through them ; the method of Revelation is historic. There may still be some who believe that the Bible, like the far-famed image of the goddess Diana, dropped from heaven just as it is, unquestionably the most remarkable of meteorites. But it was not so. The Bible is earth-born, and grew. The Temple in Jerusalem was forty years a-building ; for the building of this greater Temple within which the glory of God is enshrined, from the day when its foundations were laid, far back in the dawn of history, to the day when its dome, with mystic symbols and rainbow hues, flashed out on the dim vision of the aged John, you must reckon at least two thousand years. And what of the builders employed on this great work ? Here are men differing in age, manner, and speech ; poets, philosophers, and historians ; royal hands like David's and Solomon's, skilled to carve a pillar or shape an arch, and rude hands like Amos', summoned from the plough to wield a trowel or carry a hod ; the facile pen of a gifted writer like Paul, and the horny hand of a Galilean fisherman, more used to

grasp an oar than to hold a pen. Yet the Bible is not a collection of books ; it is one throughout, and its unity is inviolable. You cannot separate the Epistles from the Gospels. The Gospels are the fulfilment of prophecy. Prophecy enforces the law.¹ The law is rooted in the history of the Chosen People. The last chapters of Revelation are structurally related to the first of Genesis ; like a golden clasp they affirm and safeguard the unity of the book. The Bible unfolds like a plant, from root to stem and flower. The Spirit of God breathes throughout, appropriating the most diverse materials but assimilating all to its proper ends and aims. It is this remarkable unity that helps us to realize how, while the writers of the book are many, its Author is one.

The fact that the Method of Revelation is historic, imposes on us a twofold condition in the use we make of it.

In the first place, there is need of discrimination. The precious metal must be separated from the ore in which it is embedded ; the rind must be stripped off, that we may enjoy the sweetness of the fruit. The river rises from beneath the throne of God, but its waters are impregnated with the earthly soil through which they flow ; sometimes it is well to use a filter. The question has been keenly canvassed, whether the Bible *is*, or *contains*, the word of God. Both are true. Dynamically, it *is* the word of God. You may use it as it is, and use it fearlessly, this sword of the Spirit. It will not fail you ; there is none like it. But chemically, resolved into its constituent parts, it *contains* the word

¹ This is without prejudice to the Critical Theory. It refers to earlier, still extant, specimens of the Tôrah, as in Ex. xxi.-xxiii.

of God, heavenly truth mingled with not a little of human frailty and passion. This distinction is forced upon us. Every Sunday, in Hyde Park, the secularist exploits some trifling contradiction he has discovered in the Record, or the petty foibles and glaring failures of men whom the Bible holds up to us as beloved of God. Then the challenge follows: Is this your inspired book, the word of your God? The one effective answer is furnished by a critical study of the Old Testament. We do not deny the facts alleged, but add to them this other indisputable fact, that all through, outgrowing, subduing, and transforming the rankly human element with which it deals, the Spirit may be seen at work, creating forms of beauty and fruits of grace such as are found nowhere else. "He that ascended is the same also that descended first"; the book that leads to heaven must have come from heaven.

But while discrimination is needful, we must not less cultivate an eye for distance. To eliminate the element of time from the Bible, to treat it as if it were all on a dead level, equally and in the same way inspired, would be to spoil the perspective and to lose the stimulus that comes from an ascent with ever-widening horizons. It would be to run the risk of mistaking for decline what is only a dip in the ascending curve of progress, to mistake for a lapse into error what is only the partial presentation of a novel truth, to mistake for a breakdown of the Divine plan what is only heaven's patience with earth's imperfect instruments. When you fasten your gaze on an object in rapid motion, what you see at any one moment is really stationary. Only as you

continue to look and follow it from point to point, marking its changing relation to other more stationary objects, are you conscious of a movement which inheres not in the thing itself nor in any of its states but in the force that works on it. You cannot with the finest glass discover the vital process ; but as you compare the root with the stem, the bud with the flower, there dawns on you all the mystery of life, growth, and development. So it is with Revelation. If you take the Book of Job, there is not a verse of which you may say, " This is absolutely the truth of God " ; all is confused, conflicting, chaotic. But when you study the book as a whole, when against a dark background of suffering and sorrow you see the gentle patience that refrains from hasty speech, the craving for sympathy that vainly seeks response from man, the love of truth that scorns the shelter and the solace of a lie, the uplift of a face from earth to a heaven still black with clouds ; when you catch a distant glimpse of that heavenly wisdom whose secrets are reserved for those who have learned the fear of God ; and when, from this new standpoint, you look round on the ordered pomp and splendour of a world made by God and where God is still present alike in the hoar-frost scattered on the ground and the star-dust strewn across the sky, in the young eagles when they cry and the thunder when it rolls overhead ; then you realize that you have been listening all through the book to one of those great words of God in which He has spoken to the heart of man.

Much of your time here is spent in studies which may seem remote from the warm and vital interests of a Chris-

tian faith. You may complain at times that Hebrew roots are poor food for your soul, and the Greek lexicon a poor substitute for the ladder of prayer. But if by such studies, diligently pursued, you find your way back into a world where God has been working and familiarize yourselves with the conditions under which He works, this great reward will be yours, that His word will come to you with a directness and a vividness never known before, and you will have a vantage-ground from which to press it home on others. Let me urge you to cultivate this wide, mobile, synthetic treatment of Scripture, particularly the Old Testament.

When you deal with the New Testament whose origins may be crowded into a single century, the synthetic will naturally yield to the analytic method. Let me illustrate what I mean. How can you better engage the thoughts of your people than with St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians? Here are four chapters; one for each Sunday of a month. In chap. i. 21, you have the Christian's life; in chap. ii. 5, the Christian's example; in chap. iii. 14, the Christian's ambition; and in chap. iv. 8, the Christian's character. Round each of these verses you may gather the teaching of the whole chapter which it sums up. Thus: chap. i. 21, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

(a) Here is a good thing—to live. You will never, I hope, be so morbid or sickly as to doubt that it is a good thing to live; never so old as to forget the days of your youth.

"Oh the wild joy of living; the leaping from rock up to rock,
The strong rending of boughs from the fir trees; the cool silver
shock,
Of the plunge in the pool's living water."

(b) But here is a better thing—to die. Life never smiles into your face but death stands behind, glooming over his shoulder. Even in the morning of life men shrank from the shadow of impending death; held it better to be a hind, ploughing land among the living, than to be king among the dead. Yet here is one, who, knowing life as few of us have known it, gives the preference to death. And this is no idle chatter such as sometimes profanes the silence of the grave; no bitter jest flung in the teeth of the inevitable. As a matter of fact, Paul tells us that not death but life was for him the immediate prospect, longer life, higher service, richer fruit. He accepts the prospect with a mournful magnanimity: "For your sakes, it may be better so." For himself he never wavers. Death is emancipation from all that lets and limits life; it is gain. For:

(c) Here is the absolutely best; something that gives to life all its goodness, while reserving to death the comparative advantage it boasts. "For me to live is Christ." He could recall a time when Christ was unknown; and the outlook on life and death very different. Then, when life was a daily dying (Rom. vii. 9), Christ came, the Conqueror of death. Ever since, he has been learning more and more of the great change thus wrought. To every man, life means something—pleasure, knowledge, fame. Paul subsumes all these in the one absorbing, all-embracing idea: "To me to live is Christ." For him, the Christian life was life at its highest power, crowned with a completeness it can never have apart from Christ.

And here, if the question rises: What is this Christian life, and how is it so immeasurably the best? I do not know

how you can better save yourself from the conventional and shallow than by a diligent study of the whole chapter. You will find :

(1) The Christian life is Fellowship (ver. 5) ; a Fellowship in doing (ver. 27) ; a Fellowship in giving (*cf.* iv. 14) ; a Fellowship in suffering (*cf.* ii. 17).

(2) It is Furtherance (vers. 12-13).

Life is the sum-total of forces that resist death. There is a struggle against the blind impersonal force of nature—the birth of a self. Later on, there is the struggle of reason against sense—the awakening of the soul. Later still, there is the struggle of the Divine against the human in man, the reign of the Spirit, the triumph of grace. Trials are the discipline by which this life is perfected. Ever, it is victorious over all hindrances. Of this the risen Christ is the pledge (*cf.* ver. 20).

(3) It is Fulness—growth, development, maturity of powers (vers. 4-10).

Personality as we know it is potential rather than actual, an aim rather than an achievement. With increase of knowledge comes increase of power (ver. 9) ; and with power comes freedom, that mastery over fate by which personality asserts itself (ver. 18). Death becomes the gate of a life whose fulness is connected with the appearance of the risen Christ (ver. 23). Thus three times is the thesis proved : " To me to live is Christ."

The same analytic method may be applied not only to the rest of this Epistle but to the New Testament as a whole.

One thing I must add here. Inspiration, of which so much has been written, is not the property of a book

but an act of God. The Bible is inspired, for us at least, only so long as God speaks to us through it. It is like wires arranged by skilful fingers outside of a window, the possibility of music, but silent until the wind, breathing through them, wakens sweet strains and subtle harmonies that stir the night and charm the soul. Dante ¹ represents himself as undergoing a searching examination at the hands of the greatest of all the doctors on the question of Faith. His answers evoke the approbation and even the admiration of St. Peter himself ; but what follows ?

“ He added, of this coin the alloy and weight
 Full well the test of thine assay have stood ;
 But if thou have it in thy heart, pray state.
 Then I : Oh, yes, it shines so round and bright
 That of its mintage none can raise debate.
 Then from the depths of that transcendent light
 There came a voice : This jewel, rich and true,
 From which each virtue draweth all its might,
 Whence came it thee ? The abundant dew
 Of the most Holy Spirit, then said I,
 Poured out upon the Scriptures old and new,
 A syllogism is which doth supply
 A force so keen that all that's else inferred
 Might seem, compared with it, mere fallacy.”

There it rests. The abundant dew of the most Holy Spirit, poured out upon the sacred page, the written word, is a syllogism of which it is impossible to evade or to resist the conclusion. Apart from that, to speak of the Bible as inspired is to use a phrase which has no meaning for us.

If you are to use the Bible as your Text-book, you must yourselves be students of it to the end of your days.

¹ *Paradiso*, xxiv.

Let me then say something about the devotional study of Holy Scripture.

(a) Let me emphasize the moral conditions under which this study must be carried on. You can admire a work of art, you can solve a mathematical problem, irrespective of character, whether it be good or bad. But you cannot so handle the Bible. It is a revelation of moral truth, and it requires a moral sense, a quickened conscience, in those who study it. In this respect it is like the fabled mirror in which the eye of innocence and youth could read the secrets of the future, while a breath of impurity or insincerity dimmed its surface and darkened its mysterious depths. You remember that incident in the Passion of our Lord: "When Herod saw Jesus he was glad, for he was desirous to see Him for a long season ; then he questioned Him in many words, but He answered him nothing." He who had a word of pity and power for all, who was Himself the Word of God, stood tongue-tied before this man whose bad life made it impossible for him to hear. It has been the same with ourselves many times ; we have read the Bible in vain. A restless spirit, unfaithfulness in the discharge of duty, want of charity toward an offending brother, these things have dimmed the mirror and silenced the voice of truth. It has nothing to say to us. Thus the Bible in a minister's study acts as a spiritual thermometer ; and more, it is a perpetual incentive to holy living.

(b) Remember next the Christian standpoint, from which the Bible must be read. It is the record of a revelation which terminates in Jesus Christ, and apart from Him it cannot be understood. I have warned you,

in a previous lecture, against the pathetic fallacy which reads the present into the past, the experience of the Christian Church into the Old Testament Scriptures. On the other hand, I must remind you that there is a continuity in revelation which forbids us to isolate the Old Testament from the New. An analogy may prove useful here. The distance is immense between the earlier and later types in Nature, *e.g.*, a sea-anemone and a man. Yet it is the artistic temperament in the latter, the exquisite sensibility to light and shade, form and colour, which one finds in a Raphael or a Rubens, that gives its interest to the tiny spot of yellow pigment at the base of the tentacles of the former which is the first suggestion of an eye. "The nature of a thing," says Aristotle, "is that which it has become when the process of development is over; and whenever we forget the vital connection between the past and the present and study origins without reference to the things originated, the historic method degenerates into a pedantic antiquarianism." In this connection the experience of the apostles is instructive. They belonged to a nation that boasted itself as the people of the Book. From children they must have known it; yet how little they understood of it. It was Jesus who first opened to them the Scriptures, showed them the real inwardness of the history, and taught them to relate each part to the whole as it found expression in Himself. He is the key to Scripture because He is its goal. The symbolism of the Temple, prophetic vision and poetic rapture, acquire a deeper meaning in the light which falls from the Cross. In a circle there is just one point from which you command the whole

circumference. In the circle of revelation the central point is Christ, and, if He is within you, there is no point in the circumference of truth with which you will not find yourself in touch. I cannot put it more strongly than thus : I used to believe in Jesus because the Bible said He was the Son of God ; now I believe in the Bible because Jesus is for me the revelation of ultimate truth, and the Bible, from first to last, points to Him.

(c) In studying the Bible you must maintain the attitude of prayer. You know the difference between a book and a word. When you read a book, you are mainly passive, keeping your mind open while truth is poured in. But when you sit by the fireside and talk with a friend, there is action and reaction, the wholesome and invigorating impact of mind on mind. Everything he says suggests a question which, in its turn, provokes reply and opens some new vista of truth down which the mind may travel.

“When thought springs out to wed with thought,
Ere thought can wed itself with speech.”

Now we may be sure that the Bible, as the Word of God, will not yield its best, God will not continue to speak to us, if the talk is all on one side. The spirit of devotion must become articulate in the act of prayer ; and a prayerful spirit is essential to a fruitful study of the Word. It was thus with those to whom it first came. “Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.” “Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.” I have been interested in reading Augustine’s Commentaries to notice how, when he comes to an obscure passage, it presents itself to him as a closed

door beyond which One stands who is ready to open. Pausing for a moment, he addresses himself to his hearers thus: "Arise, seek, sigh, pant with desire; knock that it may be opened to us." "All these things," he says, "hint at something, they intimate something. They make us eager; they encourage us to knock." Thus he finds his way into the heart of Scripture, not so much by the subtlety of his intellect as by the fervour of his prayers. Mr. M'Cheyne, himself an ardent student of the Word, writing to a youth in his congregation, gives him this advice on which you too will do well to act: Spread your Bible before you on a chair, then kneel and pray; turn what you read into a prayer. Bible study will not hold us long unless it is carried on in this spirit. Prayer keeps the eye clear, the heart eager and expectant in its quest of truth.

(d) Lastly, the fact that the Bible speaks of itself as the Word of God, suggests the thought of a transcendental unity—a message direct from the heart of God. The critical method teaches us, in studying a passage, to ask first, What did God mean to say by this oracle to the man and the age to which it came? There could be no saner method of procedure than that. But we must not rest there. We must go on to ask, What does God mean to teach us and our age, not only by this fragment of truth but by the whole of which it is a part? The process of revelation is historic; its content is spiritual, and therefore eternal, truth. And so there need be no conflict between the critical method, rightly understood, and a devotional study of the Bible. In a single word I speak my mind to you. But the single

word may be composed of three, four, or five syllables. Each of these, as it is uttered, makes a distinct impression on the mind ; nor may we invert the order. But when the last is spoken, there comes a moment when five distinct ideas, coexisting in the mind, merge into a sixth, which is not any one of these but includes them all ; and there, I have said my say ! The ease with which, as the result of practice, the fusion is effected, must not blind us to the complex nature of the mental process implied. Now we must treat the Word of God on the same syllabic principle. Each age has its own message to convey ; and it is at our peril that we ignore or confound the Divine order. But when grammar, syntax, and philology have done their work, and the whole critical apparatus has been exhausted, there comes a quiet hour when there dawns on the soul a truth which is not of any age because it is eternal ; and there, ye have heard His word !

And here, I think, we may all learn from Jesus. I have no sympathy with those who wrest His high authority to foreclose some critical question. Nothing could be more mischievous than, in His great name, to force on a passage a meaning which neither the context nor the usage of the language will allow. On the other hand, with what profit and delight may we not sit at His feet as He interprets the written word, noting the profound insight, the consummate ease, the fearless freedom with which He disentangles the essence of truth from its form. " I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." How often had we read the words and failed to discover the deeper meaning which our Lord discovers

in them : God is not the God of the dead but of the living ; all live to Him. Need I remind you that it is with this higher spiritual interpretation of Scripture that we, in the Ministry of Reconciliation, have to do ? The forgiveness of sins, the adoption of sons, the gift of the Spirit, the hope of a blessed immortality, all these are but syllables in the language of Heaven. " The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." " This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

CHAPTER XII

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

OFTEN in dealing with a great subject, we are haunted by a sense of disappointment and failure. We have an idea ; but it is difficult not only to convey it to others but even to conceive it with any clearness and precision for ourselves. Yet in dealing with the idea of God, we welcome that sense of failure. It is of the very essence of the idea, that it transcends our powers of thought. A God we could comprehend would be no God for us. The fact that He transcends thought implies that He pervades and satisfies the thinker. And thus what is darkness to the intellect is sunlight to the heart. Yet even so, there are some things we can clearly see about Him.

(a) We must hold fast the Unity of God. That is a truth which runs through the whole of Scripture, yet comes very slowly to recognition. When he took a stone for a pillow and lay down to sleep under the stars, Jacob found that God was near. The God he had worshipped in his father's tent was with him on the lonely moorland ; the God of Beersheba was the God of Bethel too. And through long years of exile, while he served as a hireling in Laban's house, that same God was still at his side, befriending and inspiring him in his lonely

struggle. Thus men came to realize that God is everywhere. But a God who is everywhere is not necessarily the one God, for everywhere He may have rivals. It was a great discovery made by Israel in Egypt, that the God who had blessed them with herds and flocks in Canaan was able to assert Himself against the gods of an ancient empire, so that in the thing wherein they had done mightily He was above them all. But it was a still greater discovery made centuries later in Babylon, that the gods of the Chaldean Pantheon were empty names with no moral content or force, whereas the God they worshipped, Jehovah of Hosts, was able not only to vindicate Himself but to realize the ideals and satisfy the wants of His people. So the God who was everywhere proved to be everything as well. And a God who everywhere is everything is a God who leaves no room in the world for a rival, nor in man's heart for any reserve. He is the one true God.

I do not know that we realize the difference this truth has made. Think of a Roman youth. Every tree, spring, stream, valley and hilltop, every relation of domestic life, every function of the State, had for him its presiding Deity. In the classic Pantheon, each god represented a separate interest or aspect of life. Yet with all its strong contrasts and keen conflicts, it had no room for that element of completeness and finality which, for us, is inseparable from religion. It is the same with our friends. Much as we love them, there is not one of them we cannot conceive as bigger and better than he is. Hence the wistful note that marks all earthly love; hence the difference between friendship even when, at its highest, it evokes

reverence, and religion which is the surrender of the whole man to One who is absolutely worthy of his love. That is why the thought of God when it lays hold of us revolutionizes life. Depths of our being, never touched before, are stirred to action ; we find ourselves in finding God. " Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God."

(b) But this Unity which we predicate of God must be rightly understood. A stone is one, and a man is one ; but they are not one in the same way. The stone is simple, homogeneous throughout ; the man is one in the richness and variety of his complex being. Now the Unity of God is not simplicity—monotonous and invariable. It is not the bare abstract Being of the philosopher. Rather " it is the home of distinctions—the distinctions not dissolving the Unity, nor the Unity cancelling the distinctions." ¹ This is implied in the claim He makes : " Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart and soul and strength and mind." Again, there is a Unity of Exclusion and another of Inclusion. In a Highland valley you see an eagle poised in mid-air. Flocks and herds and even homesteads pay tribute to the royal bird, while his eye sweeps from end to end of the valley where not a bird is seen, nesting or soaring, to dispute his sway. There is never a second eagle in the same valley. That is the Unity of Exclusion. But think now of the sunlight that floods the valley, and how every blade of grass and every heather-bell, teeming fold and happy homestead, reflects and expresses the warmth and brightness which are the element in which it lives. That is the Unity of Inclusion. So it is with God. He is no " bickering

¹ Fairbairn, *Christ in Modern Theology*.

Monopolist,"¹ but a Presence deeply interfused through nature ; and every form of life and every phase of being comes to its own in Him.

(c) How then are we to conceive of a God who thus is One, yet in all ? Plainly we cannot stop short at mere conjunction, or even interpenetration as of a body by the finest ether. That way, advance is barred ; there is no passage from the many to the one. We fall back on, or rather rise to, an ethical conception of God. Thus we think of Him as Spirit, transcending the material, yet so as to pervade it with His own energy and purpose, using nature as a means to ends which terminate in Himself. From this point of view, the will of God is the law of nature ; His glory is the good, the final perfection, of the creature. Again, we think of Him as personal ; self-conscious, yet not as we are conscious of ourselves over against a world that hems us in and defines our limits, but in and through a world which is the expression of His own overflowing fullness. Personality in God does not imply individuality as it does in us. " We do not oppose ourselves to Him as co-ordinate subjects, but apprehend ourselves as having our foundation in Him as the ultimate Unity."² Nor yet can we exclude from the Divine that which is deepest, highest, most enduring in human personality, that love in which thought, feeling, and volition, each at its highest power, are focussed, so that the whole being is determined on others, consciously and intensely, for their

¹ See H. G. Wells' *God, the Invisible King*—a book in which there is much that is admirable and true, marred by a strange misconception of current theological thought.

² Dorner's *Prot. Theology*.

good. We love ; God is Love. It is thus we seek to conceive Him of whom it is written : " Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen."

See now where we have come. Love is the fulness of life. It is the impulse to give, to give its best, its all, so as to find itself in others. If, then, God is Love, it follows—not necessarily, as by any outward constraint, nor arbitrarily by mere act of will, but, if one may say so, naturally, because He is what He is—that He will create a world in which He may see Himself reflected and realize in time His eternal purpose. Thus in an ethical conception of God we find not only room for, but the ground (*vera causa*) of, a world which is no mere *tour de force*, the result of an omnipotent fiat, but based on and rooted in that Love which is His essence.

Now between such a world and the God who made it, there can be nothing of Deistic isolation or independence ; Creation implies not so much a momentary act as an abiding relation ; and Providence is the realization in time of what God willed in eternity. From a theological point of view, to believe in creation is to grant the possibility of any number of miracles, for in a very real sense God is the *anima mundi*, working not *ab extrâ* but *ab intrâ*. You remember how finely Browning puts it thus, in his " Luria " :

" Mine own East !

How nearer God we were, He glows above
With scarce an intervention, presses close
And palpitatingly, His soul o'er ours.
We feel Him, nor by painful inches know.

The everlasting minute of creation
 Is felt there ; now it is, as it was then.
 All changes at His instantaneous will,
 Not by the operation of a law
 Whose maker is elsewhere at other work."

Again, between such a world and God there can be nothing of Pantheistic confusion. A world made to be loved is a world that can love in return ; and to love, it must be free. Here we are face to face with the great problem of human freedom and Divine sovereignty. Absolute freedom in man is ruled out ; nor is it claimed for him. " The stars have it not, the sea has it not, the earth has it not ; and we men are cursed by the mockery and semblance of it as our sorest punishment " ¹ On the other hand, between sovereignty in God and that limited freedom of which we are conscious, and which alone consists with our dependent and creaturely estate, there need be no conflict. " Our wills are ours, we know not how ; our wills are ours to make them Thine." ² God might have chosen to make a world of things, acting mechanically and automatically ; He chose to make a world of men and women, intelligent and free. And, ever since, the sovereignty of God has consisted not in ignoring or cancelling but in conserving and controlling the freedom He has conferred. Any one of us can work a puppet-show, standing over the pretty toys and pulling the strings ; it takes a God, dwelling within, to control a man, born free. How He does it, we cannot tell ; history and our own experience confirm us in the belief that He does. " Videte quomodo trahit Pater ; docendo

¹ Ruskin, *Seven Lamps*.

² *In Memoriam*.

delectat, non necessitatem imponendo.”¹ “Nemo quippe salvatur invitus.”²

And yet again, such a world, based not on omnipotence but on omnipotent love, or, to adopt New Testament language, created by and consisting in Christ, the Eternal Word, can realize its ideal only as, by an ethical process and in loving obedience, it becomes *capax Dei*, increasingly sensitive and responsive to the will and purpose of God. Such a process finds its natural culmination in the coming of Christ in the flesh. Thus the love that is first proves to be last—the goal of all human progress. Rightly has it been felt that the Incarnation cannot have been an accident, an after-thought, but must have its proper place assigned it as the *terminus ad quem* of human history.

But here let me impress it on you ; the Christian doctrine of God, as I have outlined it, is just an attempt to think out the great facts recorded in the Gospel. Men knew Jesus ; and they said : We have often tried to put in words what we felt about God ; here it all is, in concrete reality ; Jesus Christ for us is God. But they were drawn farther. They were witnesses of those long nights spent in prayer, of a life the very heart of which was communion with the Eternal. It was as if a veil were lifted. Bare abstract Monotheism, in which they had been bred, kindled into something warmer, more intimate and friendly. Within the Divine Unity they found there was still room for a plurality of Persons—an I, a Thou, a He. Thus the mystery of the Trinity

¹ Augustine, quoted by Westcott in his *John's Gospel*.

² St. Bernard; see same book.

dawned on them. Best of all, they caught from the lips of Jesus that beautiful phrase, new as the utterance of a soul to God: "My Father"; and henceforth the Fatherhood of God was for them the basal fact of their religious experience and the central truth of their Gospel.

Reverently let us dwell on this great thought. It is certainly true that in the earlier Scriptures little is said about the Fatherhood of God. Even if dimly foreshadowed in the covenant relation between Jehovah and His people, it is scarcely an appreciable factor in the religious experience of the Old Testament saint. But that is as we might expect. Sonship is an ethical, rather than a physical relation. Even in an earthly home, it requires time for its development. A babe at the breast has no idea of sonship. It is a purely physical instinct that teaches him to grope with his little hands for the warm white nourishment which is all that for the time he needs. But he is not less a son because he does not realize his sonship. That for long ages men never thought of God as their Father is no proof that God did not always think of them as sons. It is equally true that sin obscures and disturbs the filial relation; but it neither ends nor suspends it. A father may treat an erring child with severity. Under certain conditions he may not be free to deal with him otherwise than as a judge. Yet, behind the severity of the judge may be all the tenderness of the father's heart; and when the judge has done his work, the father is still there. It is thus we are taught to think of God. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? My heart is turned within Me, My repentings are kindled."

It is maintained on the authority of St. Paul, that it is only through faith in Jesus and by the gift of the Spirit that we receive the adoption of sons. But adoption, the legal status, cannot be divorced from natural and moral conditions, a previous fitness, a sonship which is at least potential. The work of the Spirit is remedial and restorative. He appeals to man as man, and reveals in Christ what manhood means. The new creation implies the old. Not infrequently it has happened that a youth, wandering through a picture gallery among the works of great masters, has felt the sense of beauty stirring within him, and then and there has dedicated himself to the service of art. Yet not the less he was, *in posse*, an artist all along, with instincts dormant or repressed, waiting the call that should waken them to conscious activity. An hour with a saintly soul has made a saint of many a man ; but there must be something to appeal to, some spiritual affinity, before such a result is achieved. So it is with the influence of Christ. No doubt all nature felt the touch of His hallowing hand. We can believe that the flowers bloomed more fair when He held them up into the light, just as we are told that the fishes crowded into the net at His command. But only man turned to God as his Father ; man alone was, by nature, God's son.

The truth is, everything depends on the point of view from which we start out. If we associate with God only the idea of abstract and absolute sovereignty, un-motived will-power, then we shall see in man merely His creature. And we shall have to face the question, Why did God make man at all ? Was it in sport, or in spite ; as the play-

thing of a vacant hour, or a foil to His own incomparable Godhood? Did He, perchance, make man only to remake him? But if we think ethically of God, and if we think of man as the result not of an arbitrary decree but of a holy impulse, made to return the love to which he owes his being; then we do in effect assume as natural the filial relation in man toward God. And thus deep in nature we lay the foundations of the work of grace. It is this thought of God, of a love that mourns over us when fallen and of a heaven where we are missed, that wakens us to true repentance. Christ spoke to all men of the great Father; hence the Magdalene at His feet, bathed in tears; hence Zaccheus at His side, disbursing his ill-gotten gains. All true repentance has in it the element of tenderness and wistfulness and hope. A weary, sin-burdened world will never take the first step in the right direction, till we conjure up before it a vision of the Father and the Father's house, till we waken in men's hearts the feeling of home-sickness. Preach sin; paint it in the darkest colours; but let it always be sin against love, the only sin that a man can never forgive himself, but which is sure of forgiveness from God. "Our Father which art in heaven": it is the first, the simplest lesson you will have to teach a little child; the last, the deepest truth on which, when all else seems shaken, men learn to lean their hearts; the far-off ideal after which, you may rest assured, the best and wisest of men are still slowly striving. "Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Now, if we start with this truth about God we shall find a new light shed on many of the great problems of life.

The world, man, history, religion, each will come to its own in relation to Him ; the world, as a home ; man, as God's child ; history, as the education of the race ; religion, as the filial instinct, fellowship with the Eternal.

I. *The World, as a Home.*—If stone walls do not a prison make, neither do they make a home. Essential to the idea of home is forethought, contrivance, the subordination of means to ends as dictated by love. It is in this light we are coming to view the world. Fifty years ago, the doctrine of evolution was regarded as unscriptural and irreligious. Better understood and more precisely stated, it has given us just what we seek, a view of the world as the sphere of a continuous Divine activity, carefully prepared and wisely fitted to be the abode of man. It is a great mistake to hunt through the first chapter of Genesis as if it were a museum of facts, or to treat it as a test of scientific theories. What we find there is an application to the origin of things and the creation of the world of certain elementary religious ideas ; as that God is the author of life, that the Divine method is everywhere and always progressive, that the world was made to be a home for man. Hold fast by these ideas, and you need never fear a conflict between revelation and science. In dark and troublous days, the great prophets sought to base men's faith on the element of permanence, of order and law, in Nature. To a people tortured by the daily uncertainties of a siege, Jeremiah says : " Thus saith the Lord, If ye can break My covenant of the day, and My covenant of the night, that there should not be day nor night in their seasons ; then may My covenant be broken with David My servant." So the great prophet

of the Exile : " Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created all these things." So with the magnificent imagery of the Book of Job, where the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind ; all the feverish heat in the heart of a man cannot " loosen the bands of Orion." So, too, with the wealth of parabolic teaching which lights up every page of the Gospels. A theologian should never pose as a scientific expert ; but he ought to be " at home " in God's world. He cannot breathe too deeply the fragrance of the flowers, or the freshness of the fields, or the calm of a summer morn or eve. Only thus will the fretfulness and instability of our religious experience be corrected. An illustration, culled from nature and skilfully applied, may prove to be a leaf from the tree of life for the healing of a wounded heart.

2. *Man, as God's Child.*—The first impression we receive is that of an utter disproportion between man and his material environment. Set him down in the great Minster, under the dome of St. Paul's ; he is dwarfed by his own workmanship. Then transport the Minster, set it down among the mountains, under the shadow of the Alps or the Himalayas ; it seems no more than a Swiss chalet or a pilgrim's hut, itself dwarfed into insignificance among the works of God. Yet the highest mountain would be indiscernible from the surface of the moon ; and the moon is a child of our own, one of earth's satellites. Infinite space, strewn with stars, lies round us on every side, and man seems lost amid the immensities. Never was house thus built, to dwarf its inmate. But this first impression must be corrected. In a universe which he could grasp and measure, man were left without stimulus

to mental growth, "tame in earth's paddock as her prize," and there is a spiritual element in him which has no proportion to his material environment. When you have seen a child kneel to say his evening prayer, or a mother bend over a sick babe, or a man plunge into the surf, risking his own life to save a comrade from drowning, you have seen something which in dignity outweighs a world, out-shines a sun, out-circles the farthest star. You realize that it takes infinite space to be the cradle of a soul. Man is God's child ; he is made in His image, by which we understand not the form erect, the upturned eye, but the mystery of his self-conscious personality. If you look down into a well, you see your own image ; if you look down into yourself, you see the image of God.

Now this suggests a very fruitful line of thought. If man is God's image, how much of God may he not learn from himself ! How do we know God ? By reading the Bible, you reply. But before there was any Bible, those who wrote the Bible, how did they know God ? The answer is clear ; the primal revelation of God to man is man himself. This is no new theology ; the Bible knows it well. "He that formed the eye, shall He not see ? He that planted the ear, shall He not hear ? He that taught man knowledge, shall He not know ?" You would give your life to save the child you love : see God, the great Father, there in yourself. You never sleep so soundly as when you have tried to do a good turn to some one else. If a man says : I do not like to trouble you, your answer is : My dear sir, it is a joy to help. And, again, you see God in yourself ; you hear the echo of His

great word : I will help thee. You have learned to be patient, to discount, to forgive. Who put that spring of forgiving love within you ? Where is the ocean from which it draws, if not in God ? “ If ye being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will not your Father ? ” Never pin a man to proof-texts in confirmation of religious truth. Appeal to his conscience ; let him find it there.

From this idea of man as God's image, we may draw two further inferences. Take the rudest marble figure. If it be an image at all, there is something about it which suggests the original. However unlike, however far apart they may be, you cannot see the one without thinking the other near ; while every chip of the chisel brings these two, the image and the original, nearer, makes it easier, more imperative, to pass in thought from the one to the other. So it is along the line of moral and social progress, man finds God. As he grows, God grows on him, at once greater and nearer than before. On the other hand, you can never have a perfect image, till, instead of marble hewn by the hand, you have some more plastic stuff informed by a quickening spirit, as the body is the image of the soul that shapes it daintily, to its own liking, and breathes through every pore. And in the same way, a man cannot be the living, breathing image of his Maker, cannot, in the full sense of the phrase, be a child of God, until he receive the Spirit of adoption. That is the message you have to carry to every man you meet : You can never be your true self apart from Christ, till you know the Father in Him.

3. *History, as the Education of the Race.*—Sonship,

we have seen, is an ethical relation, requiring time for its realization. In the Old Testament we see how slowly the idea of God disentangled itself from that of nature. Abraham lifts the curtain of his tent and stands under the stars, in the presence of the Eternal. Later on, in the problems of a complex social system, the prophets spell out the Law of Righteousness ; God speaks to them. Still later, a homeless people, flung out into the mid-stream of history, feels itself steadied and steered as by an invisible hand ; a universal Providence enfolds it. One other step is taken. Stripped of all the forms of religion, without priest or altar, men find God in themselves, at the heart of the human ; and thus learn to recognize Him when at last He turns His full face on them in Jesus Christ. Now, if we have the thoroughness and daring of a great thinker like St. Paul, we shall not hesitate to generalize from all this. What God did manifestly for one people, He did not less really for all. The world-empires of antiquity, the Idealism of Greece, the Law and Order of Rome, were a preparation for the final revelation which came to man as man in Jesus Christ. Nor shall we dream that the education of the race is yet complete. Truth given is slowly apprehended. In the birth of a new philosophy, Christian in all but name, among our fellow-subjects in India,¹ we have proof that the Spirit of God is still at work. "I taught Ephraim to go, taking them by their arms ; but they knew not that I healed them." It is thus we answer the questions which sometimes vex us as to the future of those who have never heard the name

¹ *E.g.*, in the writings of Rabindranath Tagore.

of Christ and have seen God only through a dim and distorted medium.

History is an education ; life a discipline. Each man for himself, must learn that truth, where only it can be learned, in the school of experience, if we would apply it with confidence and skill to the needs of others. As we look out on the world with its wasted energies, baffled hopes, and shattered ideals, with the break-down of modern civilization and the recrudescence of ancient barbarism, we do not wonder that men ask : Is there a God ? Indeed, in these dark days there seems to be no alternative to a blank atheism save in the Christian doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, a God who dwells in light which blinds us by reason of its exceeding brightness, a Father whose aim is not the peace or pleasure, but the profit and perfecting of His children. " Go thine inscrutable way, O eternal Providence ! Only let me not despair of thee, because of this inscrutability. Let me not despair of thee, even if thy steps seem to me to be moving back. It is not true that the shortest line is always straight." ¹

4. *Religion, a Fellowship*.—Let me repeat it once more. The true ideal of sonship is not to be realized in the nursery or the schoolroom ; it comes later, with the disciplined powers and relative independence which make the Father's will their own. Certainly religion is a bond ; but the bond is inward and spiritual, the filial instinct. " Henceforth I call you not servants but friends ; for all that I have heard of the Father, I have made known to you." Here, too, is something we must learn.

¹ Lessing's *Education of the Race*.

For three hundred years, ever since the Reformation, we have been training men to think of religion as if it meant the acceptance of a creed or submission to a form. Always restive, they have broken loose at last ; and we have mourned them as lost to God, because lost to us. But what has happened ? They have turned their backs on the temple, as did One greater than they before them ; but in the wilderness they have met with God. Deaf to our crying, they have heard His call. The primal instincts have been stirred once more ; and men are groping their way back to the great simplicities of life, the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. Duty and love, service and sacrifice, these, if we judge rightly, are to be the religion of the future. Is not that what our Lord meant, when He said : " The hour cometh, and now is, when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem men shall worship the Father. God is a Spirit ; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth " ; *i.e.*, not in divergent forms or contending creeds, but in a unity of purpose and heart.

For myself I must confess how slowly I have outgrown the sense of constraint, the fear of hell, which is, I suppose, natural to us all, and learned at the feet of Jesus that one great word which is the sum of all truth and the goal of all human progress : " Abba, Father." I would have you learn it too.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PERSON AND WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

As the object of a Christian faith, Jesus is the heart of the Christian Gospel. "We preach not ourselves," says St. Paul, "but Christ Jesus the Lord." Our subject to-day is the Person and the Work of Christ. We cannot separate these two. A person is known only by what he says and does, by his work. On the other hand, the value of what he says and does depends on what he is. The scratch of a pen from one man may be worth reams of paper covered by another. The latter may be only a petition setting forth a grievance or arguing a case; the former may be a royal signature, conveying authority. The historic and the dogmatic are inextricably interwoven in the Gospel, however we may distinguish them in thought. Let us not forget the practical aim of these lectures. My object is to help you to conceive and present the Gospel message so as to obviate difficulties and reconcile antagonisms which are largely the result of misunderstanding. And perhaps I shall best accomplish my object, if I lead you along the line of thought which I myself have followed in the quest for truth.

1. *The Person of Christ.*—To begin; I found myself confronting an actual and indisputable situation. I knew enough of history to conceive the world into which

Christ came—a background of Nature Religions, wild, orgiastic, mystical, in the north and east ; in the foreground, Greece with her cult of the Beautiful, Rome with her well-ordered social life, and the Jew with his ethical genius and a thirst for righteousness not yet satisfied. Into this world of vivid contrasts and conflicting forces Jesus came, explained by no one of them, nor by all of them together, and yet in vital contact with each. Platonism received a new lease of life from Christianity ; the Imperial Ideal of Rome was taken over and realized by the Christian Church ; the Jew found in Jesus what he had missed in the Temple and the Law, a righteousness that makes the sinner just.

And then, of the modern world in which we live, it might be said with truth that it has been made by Christ. Everywhere His influence is felt. It is not, of course, asserted that Christendom is co-extensive with the race. There are still millions who have never heard the Saviour's name. Even in this Christian land there are many who deny His claim. But while other historic religions have been involved in the fortunes of the peoples that gave them birth, or imposed on others only by force, Christianity has naturalized itself in every soil and speaks the *lingua franca* of the human heart. Actually in large measure, potentially without any reserve, it is the Universal Faith. Once again ; no man lives to himself ; and some men live on after death in the words they have spoken and the deeds they have done. But, as they recede into the past, they relax their hold on us. Socrates and Cæsar are already little more than names ; of Jesus alone you can say that He is as living a force to-day as when He was on

earth. The latest developments of science and philosophy are the application of truths first taught by Him, and the great industrial problems of the day await their solution at His hand. No intelligent man can escape the question: What think ye of Christ? and on the answer he gives depends the complexion and the course of his character and life. After eighteen centuries of ceaseless and surprising progress, Jesus is still far ahead of the race, the goal toward which we are lamely striving.

In describing a circle, you draw a line which at every point must be equally distant from the centre. In much the same way, as we review the history of mankind, we see that in its repeated revolutions it is controlled by a central purpose which, once for all, has become articulate in, and still is defined for us by, Jesus Christ. The fact that the great historic cycles are not exact circles as in mathematics, but spirals as in nature, that the movement is in an ascending curve, is further proof, that in history as in nature, the central force is vital. The living Christ is at the heart of all real progress. "Every one," says Martensen, "who acknowledges the principle of causality must, from the vast world-determining influence which has issued and still issues from Christ, and with which no other influence in history can compare, infer a power which immeasurably excels all others."

At this point, I turned to the Gospels using them not as authorities but simply as documents, and found myself at last face to face with Jesus Christ. It is not easy to speak of Him. Other men are great along one line, as statesmen, soldiers, or sages. It is otherwise with Jesus. You cannot classify Him. In Him are the riches and the

harmony of a nature in touch with human life at every point. Here is One whom children selected as their play-mate ; to whom the sad and weary turned for comfort ; from whom the brave and hopeful drew their inspiration for life's task. The rich young ruler, laying aside the proud reserve natural to youth, kneels to Him in the public street ; Nicodemus, burdened with age and honours, comes to Him under cover of night, seeking wisdom from one who never learned. Men who have fought hard, carry the scars of battle with them to the grave ; for Jesus life was one long conflict, yet an unruffled peace dwelt at His heart. Steep is the ascent for others—they rise to fall ; calmly He holds the heights, conscious not of what He ought to be but of what He is. He claims to be without sin ; and, though we know little of His inner life, the claim is granted without a question. There is a transparent purity, an intensity of holy love in Him which disarms criticism. Most of us know of some brilliant man whose career has been a failure owing to some perhaps trifling defect ; the best seem still capable of betterment. One alone is perfect, and we do not need to name Him. Jesus is not merely an ideal, He is an ideal realized.

Stephen Graham tells the story of an Armenian painter who set out to paint the face of Jesus. The attempt was a complete failure. As well might he assay to catch the glint of sunlight on the sea, multitudinous and ever-changing. Here was not one face but many ; and sometimes it seemed to the painter no other than his own. Giving up the hopeless task, he drew near to the great Original. Jesus beckoned to him and said : Thou couldst not paint

my face because of the reflection of other faces there ; henceforth thou shalt look into no other face without seeing mine. So it is with us all. First we find ourselves in Him ; then we find Him in every man we see. All this is of course familiar ; yet let me impress it on you. It is from the moral supremacy of Jesus you must start out, not from any dogmatic interpretation of it. This it is which arrests attention and compels the submission of men's hearts.

Who, then, is Jesus ? How shall we think and speak of Him ? Above all, how does He think and speak of Himself ? Now in the Gospels I find that Jesus uniformly speaks of Himself as the Son of Man.¹ The title, borrowed from prophecy, no doubt had Messianic associations ; but for that very reason we might have expected Him to avoid it. No doubt, too, it linked Him to those around. Nothing aristocratic or official, no reserve of mystery, must separate Him from them. But of that they were already well aware. Every hour of friendly and familiar intercourse assured them of it ; no phrase was needed to emphasize the fact. Why, then, does He uniformly present Himself to them as the Son of Man ? Here let me quote a sentence from Dorner : " We have in Him the product of a consciousness for which the fact of human sonship, or being the Son of Man, was not that which lay nearest to it, a matter of course, but secondary and superinduced." Try to grasp the meaning of that somewhat cryptic utterance. Begin with yourself. An air of freedom and the traditions of an imperial race have

¹ For our Lord's use of this phrase, as recorded in the Gospels, see *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, pp. 308-310.

breathed about you from your birth. They shape your character and regulate your conduct. It never occurs to you to protest that you are a subject of the British Empire. What else are you, or could you be? But if a man crosses the Channel, learns our language and naturalizes himself on our soil, it is otherwise with him. Was it thus with Jesus? Does the emphasis with which He asserts His human sonship betray a consciousness that for Him it was not original but acquired? Dorner thinks it does. If this consideration appears over-subtle to you, consider a phrase like this: "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Try to measure the depths of mystery which lie behind that simple phrase through which a pre-existent Christ looks out on you, conscious of the amazing condescension that stooped to conquer, that "came" to save. Quite unmistakable, too, is the claim which Jesus urges for Himself in this connection. Insight and sympathy are valuable assets in any man, but they confer on no man the right to sit in judgment on his fellows. Yet Jesus affirms that all judgment is committed to Him inasmuch as He also is "a Son of Man."¹ Again, He says: The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins. Stupendous claim! to intervene between a man and the consequences of his own actions, to undo the past, and erase its record from the book of remembrance. No mere man, no creature however glorious, though made before time was, could use such words. It is impossible to miss their meaning or minimize their import. For Jesus, humanity was

¹ John, v. 27. "The omission of the article concentrates attention upon the nature and not upon the personality of Christ" (Westcott, *in loco*).

not primary but secondary. Behind the human lay a Divine Sonship.

Thus I found myself confronting the transcendent mystery of the Incarnation. But how can we conceive a Being in whom two natures are combined in one person? Must not the manhood encroach on the Godhead so as fatally to compromise it; or the Godhead break through the manhood and evaporate it into an airy and transparent guise? Here is the question of questions for us; and even though we do not understand, we may and ought to seek a rational basis for our faith. I fall back, as so often already, on what I know of myself, on love and conscience.

Every man who has been so fortunate as to find a woman who has stooped to love him, every man who has passed from what we call single blessedness into the estate of wedlock, knows something of the mysterious duality into which consciousness may open out. He wills and works his own appointed task, conscious of personal responsibility as before; yet finds himself at every turn, and in a thousand subtle ways, re-enforced, enriched, and ennobled by that other with whom his love has made him one. Certainly he is not less himself because henceforth his life moves not round one centre but about two foci. If we could disentangle the delicate fibres woven together, the two selves wedded, in the simplest act of earthly love, might we not comprehend the ineffable union between the Divine and the human in Jesus Christ?

Again, I could recall a time when, in St. Paul's words, I thought and spoke and felt as a child, alive without

the law, acting by instinct. I knew how, out of that dim twilight of consciousness, I awoke to a higher day, facing the tremendous moral problem of a life. I had the power to choose my own aims and lines of action. But the power to choose is only formal, not yet real, freedom. It implies a state of unstable equilibrium, not meant to continue. Like the fabled ass's skin, it shrinks with use. If I choose wrongly, I forfeit the power to choose and find myself the slave of evil habit. If I choose rightly, I approach a stage when the *posse non* becomes the *non posse, peccare*. Only the good will is really free. Moral freedom is the union of freedom and necessity, of will and conscience. What then, I asked, is conscience? Any theory that treats it as a product of the past, of education or environment, fails utterly. It leaves unexplained the categorical imperative, the authority with which conscience speaks, opposing me to the world and even, in the great crises of life, to myself. Conscience is a revelation of absolute eternal truth. It is God speaking in me. Often have I asked myself: How would it be if, instead of receiving messages from the unseen, I could lift the veil and look in on the face of Him who speaks to me? That cannot be. My nature is not deep enough, strong, pure, good enough for that; God has not willed it so. But it was otherwise with Christ, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily. In Him the river of life, tidal to its very source, has flung back the barriers, widened out its banks, and merged itself in the ocean. Jesus never speaks of conscience; but of what He sees and hears with the Father. "I and the Father are one."

Is there any value in such considerations? Do they at least suggest a new point of view? If I were to say that the Incarnation meets us on the line of natural development, you would probably misunderstand me; yet what else am I to say? God is in everything He has made—unconsciously in the flower, instinctively in the bird. He is in every one of us—who are made in His image. Receptivity for God is the essence of human nature. Nowhere does the heart of man speak out as in that utterance of the Psalmist: "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." True, it is one thing to thirst, and another thing to slake one's thirst at the fountain-head. But must not that prayer be answered? Somewhere, somehow, must not the purpose for which man was made be realized? Where, then, but in the Christ? Thus the Incarnation, remaining as it ever must, a transcendent mystery, is seen to strike its roots deep into the heart of things. It sums up and completes God's revelation of Himself in human history. This is the rational basis for a Christian faith.

Every man is, in a sense, original; brings with him something which through him is added to the common stock of human experience and thought. I am not an artist; yet the beautiful conceptions of poet and painter are mine to enrich my life. I have no knowledge of higher mathematics; yet the calculations of Newton and Kepler have made the universe intelligible, a happy, well-ordered home for me. Christ's contribution to human experience is His unique consciousness of a Divine Sonship; and what I owe to Him I share with Him. In the fulness of the times, God sent forth His

Son, that we might receive the adoption of sons through Him.

2. From the Person of Christ we turn to the consideration of *His Work*. Much that might here be said as to the more general aspects of the subject we pass by, that, within the brief space at our disposal, we may reach as near as may be to its heart—the sufferings and death of our Lord.

Already in a former lecture we have seen that the Cross came to Jesus not as a surprise but as the goal toward which He moved. “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!” Passing by many earlier and vaguer anticipations of His passion, let us begin with the words of institution at the Last Supper. “This is My body broken for you, My blood of the new Covenant shed for many. . . I will drink it anew with you in the kingdom of God.” Provisionally our Lord accepts the Old Testament idea of the Covenant and transfers it to Himself. He identifies His death with the Paschal sacrifice, and sees in it the inauguration of that kingdom of which, from the first, He had been the herald and interpreter. Much as He knew and said about the Fatherhood of God and the love that waits with open arms to receive the penitent, it was not hidden from Him what such forgiveness must cost. God is not less the King because He is the Father. The penalty for sin must be paid. Without shedding of blood is no forgiveness. From the upper room He finds His way to the garden. And here a strange fact emerges. Men to whom life is dear have yet been known to face death with resolution and equanimity,

even with alacrity. For a great end, dimly seen but deeply felt, they have kissed the scaffold and bathed their hands in the flame that was to consume them. Jesus does not meet death in that manner. He, through whom other men die gracefully and even gaily, Himself shrinks from death. "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." It was not physical pain that daunted Him, nor all the shame of the cross. It was the vision of sin wrought out to its uttermost issue—defiance hurled by men at God in their rejection of Him whom God had sent. As yet it was only a vision; yet He shrank from it in the bitterness of a sorrow that was "unto death." So He stumbles on to Calvary. Much here is tender and beautiful; the meekness and fortitude of the Sufferer. He prays for His murderers, He stoops to bid farewell to the friends of a lifetime; He rouses Himself to speak great words of power and promise to the dying thief at His side. Alas! that was not to be the end. From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land, and at the ninth hour was heard that weirdest cry ever wrung from human lips: "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" If we could tell what these words meant, if we could pierce the gloom that hung about the cross, we should require no theory of atonement, we should know exactly what it implied.

I remember how I sat late one night in earnest converse with a friend. We were both preachers; our theme the Gospel, with atonement as its heart, and these great words as the crux of all. My friend, so far as I understood him, held by what is called the Moral Theory of the atonement. Without doubt, Jesus was for him

Saviour and Son of God. With a fine passion, the more admirable because of the restraint with which it was expressed, he spoke of the inspiration, the new ideal, the sense of power which had come to him through Jesus Christ. I knew well how true it was—made good by years of hard and fruitful work in a poor parish in London. But he confessed that he had no explanation of these words save this ; that, as earth-born mists obscure the light even of the sun, as the best and brightest of us is liable to fits of depression, so Jesus at that hour,—I hesitate to say it, but I think this was what he meant,—Jesus fancied Himself forsaken. I could not then accept that view ; I cannot now. I make no claim to omniscience for Jesus. I have no sympathy with those who catch at His *obiter dicta* and exploit them as if they were meant to foreclose the way of scientific or critical research. But that at the centre of His moral being, at the very point from which depends the salvation of the world, He was the victim of a pathetic delusion, I did not and cannot believe. I feel certain that His experience as here recorded was not only subjectively genuine, but based on objective fact. And I raise the question : How could Jesus be forsaken by God ?

Now the development of Jesus, as the God-man, may be traced in two directions. It was at once expansive and intensive. As a child, He wakened up to consciousness in an earthly home. The sanctities of domestic life opened out into the wider life of the nation. That again, like a garment that is outgrown, rends and leaves Him face to face with the broadly human. “ I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me

should not abide in darkness." There speaks One whose consciousness transcends the limits of space and time imposed on us, and identifies Him with the race. Meanwhile there is a development intensively. Very early within the Temple, later in baptism and in many still hours of communion with the unseen, He fathoms the depths of His own mysterious personality. His life's breath, to quote the prophet's words, is in the fear of the Lord. "Every fibre of His being winds itself about God with an ineffable, sickening, fainting desire."¹ Along these two lines He moves *pari passu*; loving the world ever more as He loves the Father more, and in the holy love of the One seeing the infinite possibilities of the other; yet conscious of the growing distance between them. And now, as He hangs upon the cross, He sees, on the one side, a world hating goodness and, on the other, God hating sin, and knows Himself the mean term between these two, loving both. The mean term in this case is no arithmetical symbol but a human soul, strained to the breaking-point, yet patient, resolute, and in the end triumphant, in a love that cleaves with equal intensity and by the same necessity of nature to the world and God.

Of one thing we may feel sure, that God must forgive if men repent. But do they, can they? Can they free themselves of the darkness and deadness which sin entails, so as to pass any adequate judgment on themselves? Can they measure the infinite disgrace of sin in the dishonour done by it to God? Jesus only could and did; and the whole Drama of Redemption is wrought out within the consciousness of the God-man as, in holy love,

¹ *Colloquia Peripatetica*, by Dr. Duncan.

He makes His soul an offering for sin. Ordinary criticism of the atonement is disarmed in presence of such a situation. Here is not one man suffering for another ; but all men, in that one Man who is their head and heart, yielded up to the judgment of God. Here is God not laying our sin upon another, but taking it to Himself, and by bearing ending it. Admittedly in such a situation there are elements which it is impossible for us to reconcile. We cannot tell what Christ suffered in that dread hour when the light was turned to darkness in His soul. But we know that He tasted death for every man ; and what is death, in its essence, but desertion, to be forsaken by Him who is the light and life of His own world ?

To sum up. Sin is the great Unreason, and the remedy for it must be sought in the infinite depths of a Divine love and sorrow that transcend human reason. For us, an atonement in fact implies a contradiction in thought ; and that is what meets us here.

Perhaps we shall best do justice to the experience of our Lord, if we mark wherein it certainly differed from anything we can ever know. Thus ; a mother loves her child. His innocence is her delight. His waywardness only makes her more patient. She argues that, if others give him up, there is the more reason why his mother should cleave to him. Love does not blind her to his faults, nor shake her faith in goodness. At the worst, she hands him over, with a reverence which, though it may be speechless, is never without hope, to the Everlasting Mercy. He is God's, not hers. But for Jesus there could be no such transference. He loved the world not as another but as Himself.

You remember the words Tennyson puts into King Arthur's lips as he turns away from his guilty and dishonoured Queen :

" My love through flesh hath wrought into my life
So far that my doom is, I love thee still.
Let no man dream but that I love thee still."

It was a noble doom ; that, through tarnished mortal flesh, a high and sacred passion of love should work till it became his life, so that he must love, true to the old ideals yet forgiving those who had betrayed them, trusting yet to see them realized in a world redeemed by love. But Christ's doom was heavier far. In all space was no safe retreat, no narrowing nunnery wall, within which He might leave men to learn the lesson of a late repentance. If the world was to be redeemed, it must be redeemed then and there by Him ; and to redeem the world He must share its doom.

Make one more attempt to think the unthinkable. A man sins wilfully, boasting of his freedom in the moment of its abuse and consequent forfeiture. The act becomes a habit that masters him. The habit tends to a character, the notes of which are fixity and finality. He wakens up at last in a silence more terrible than any storm, where conscience has ceased to strive, the Spirit to plead, God to be gracious. What is his response ? " Let Him go ! I hate God." That is Hell, hopeless because loveless. But Jesus never loved God more passionately than on the cross, in that hour when He knew, as no other ever did or could, what it was to be God-forsaken. No wonder that the light He loved was turned to darkness

then. It was a momentary glimpse into the fate of the lost. Then surely, rather than in the dewy slumber that followed on death, He made His dread descent into Hell. And Hell faced lovingly was and is, for Him, for us, the gate of Heaven. What do I say? Do I say anything at all, or only darken counsel with vain words? Silence becomes us here rather than speech. Like Dante from his *Inferno*, like Hosea from the dim underworld where he saw Love spoiling Death, we grope our way upward out of this nethermost gloom. One thing only we bring with us,—and this alone can fit us for the work to which we have been called,—an awful sense of what sin means, of what atonement implied, and of that love which, wakening us to repentance by its sorrow, leads us back to pardon and to peace in God.

3. Yet it is no “drooping, pain-drenched” figure that we hold up before men, moving them to pity, when we preach Jesus. “He ever liveth to make intercession for us.” He does not, like the good old monks who look out on us from the canvas of the great Masters, spend the ages on His knees, with folded hands, in innocent but fatuous supplication. In the language of the New Testament, intercession means intervention. He is at our side, in the thick of the battle of life. He is the point in space, the moment in time, the event in history, where the eternal breaks in on us, and God still reveals Himself to man. Never radiant Apollo, springing up into the east, scattering darkness with his sunbeams, more vital than He! In a single sparkling phrase, the Psalmist makes Him live before us: “Thou hast the dew of Thy youth”; and even St. Mark, prosaic enough in his conception of

the Gospel story, blossoms into poetry as he tells of the young man in white garment, a vision of immortal youth, who held the empty tomb. If in the past we have buried Him in the creeds and sealed the stone in name and by authority of all the Synods and Councils of Christendom, in the fond belief that we had captured and confined an otherwise disturbing and dangerous force, we must confess that we too have failed. "While we slept," He has escaped us. Already He is abroad, everywhere at work, blending with the dawn, revealing Himself in the instincts and impulses of a new age which has come to birth through Him. We do not travel back, but forward, to find Him. In the dreams that stir men's souls, in every effort after a higher order of things, gentler manners, purer laws, a richer, fuller life, He comes to meet us. "It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen." Preach Him, the living Christ, Himself the Reconciliation, in Paul's grand phrase, "of all things, both which are in heaven and which are on earth," of God and man.

"Once I met two ascetics of a certain religious sect in a village of Bengal. 'Can you tell me,' I asked them, 'wherein lies the special feature of your religion?' One of them hesitated for a moment and answered: 'It is difficult to define that.' The other said, 'No, it is quite simple. We hold that we have first of all to know our own souls under the guidance of our spiritual teacher, and, when we have done that, we can find Him, the Supreme Soul, within us.' 'Why don't you preach your doctrine to all the people of the world?' I asked. 'Whoever feels thirsty will of himself come to the river,' was his reply. 'But, then, do you find it so? Are they

coming ? ’ The man gave a gentle smile, and with an assurance which had not the least tinge of impatience or anxiety, he said, ‘ They must come, one and all.’ ” ¹ It is even so. “ I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.”

¹ *Sadhana*, by Rabindranath Tagore.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MINISTRY OF THE SPIRIT

YEAR by year, as Whitsunday comes round, we celebrate with more or less of emphasis and solemnity what we hold to have been the birthday of the Christian Church. On such occasions it is natural to revert in thought to the Upper Room, and to live over again the great events which transpired there—the days of waiting, the hours of prayer, the eventful moment when a whisper among the olives swelled into a rushing mighty wind which shook the place where they were assembled, the moral transformation wrought, the witness borne. The first page in the history of the Church is the brightest of all. In the very hour of her birth, like Minerva springing from the head of Zeus, she made full proof of the spiritual power which was her birthright.

Yet here we must guard against a misconception. If the baptism of the Spirit given at Pentecost was something novel, we might infer that it was also unique, something with which we have no direct and personal relation. Or, on the other hand, we might infer that the special manifestations of that day, gifts of healing and of tongues, were essential, if not to the *esse*, at least to the *bene esse* of the Church. Or again, we might overlook the ages of preparation and ignore the moral

conditions under which alone the Spirit works. That we may do justice to the inner and ethical significance of the great event, we must widen our outlook and master the teaching of Scripture as a whole on the Ministry of the Spirit.

Turning then to the first page of Revelation, we read : " The earth was without form, and void ; and darkness was upon the face of the deep ; and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Here we see a bottomless abyss seething with lawless forces, germs of life that had no power of self-development, the rude material of a world yet to be ; and, brooding over it, like a bird in her nest, or an artist bending over a shapeless block of marble, the quickening Spirit. All the life, the order and beauty, which ensued, are thus traced back to their original source. Life in its most elementary forms is a manifestation of the Divine energy. Now, surely, this is not only interesting but revolutionary. The distinction between nature and grace, legitimate within certain limits and for certain ends, breaks down here ; from the Divine side, it is seen to have no foundation. The God of nature is the God of grace. The Spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead breathed through creation then as it breathes still on a spring day, renewing the face of the earth. Creation is the temple made without hands, wherein every flower that blooms is a separate altar on which the vital spark, the heaven-lit fire, is burning. Thus universal in His presence and power is the life-giving Spirit of God.

Next let us turn from the creation of the world to

the history of man, and study the variety of the Spirit's methods as indicated there.

Look at Samson first. You know the sort of man he was, big, kindly, human, a fellow of infinite jest. No withes were supple, no ropes strong enough to bind him. It might seem an abuse of words to speak of him as a saint ; and yet again and again it is written : "The Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson." Nor will you wonder at this, if you study the age in which he lived, too tired and sad to care for anything ; if you consider how often mental vacancy means vice, how often the tension of a situation may be relieved by a playful humour, while too great gravity precipitates a crisis. In dealing with a dull pupil, to release the slumbering mentality, you must waken a smile, and rouse him to laughter. One thing is certain, we have no right to identify religion with gloom.

Look at Gideon ; a timid, shrinking, passive creature, threshing a handful of wheat in the wine-press to hide it from the Midianites ; and note the sudden transformation which presents him to us as a leader of men, prompt in action, sound in judgment, protesting against the social evils of the age and hurling a little handful of men against a mighty host. Note, too, how conciliatory he is in the hour of victory, not more eager to shatter the enemy abroad, than to unite discordant elements at home. Gideon is every inch a soldier and a patriot ; but it is the sword of the Lord he wields, and the Spirit of the Lord that invests him for his task. How often has it been so ! We know the work that Luther did ; we honour him as one of the great doctors

of the Church. But the same Spirit that was in him stirred in William Tell. The work of Luther in Germany, the Reformation of religion all over Europe, would have been impossible but for the prior appeal of the peasant-patriot to the primal instincts of the human heart. Whenever you witness the uprising of a people, a passion for freedom, the love of home, you see the working of the same Spirit that armed Gideon for the fight.

Then think of Bezaleel and Aholiab. The camp of Israel is turned into a workshop or factory, presided over by the genius of these two men. Where did they graduate? At whose feet did they study the fine arts? The Spirit of the Lord called them by name, and taught them to mould and carve so as to beautify the sanctuary. It would be absurd to affirm that every man of genius is a great man or a good Christian. Yet the artistic temper, if it has its perils, has its prerogatives. It, too, is the gift of the Spirit. We speak of art in a patronizing way as the handmaid of religion; Scripture treats them as twin-sisters, born in the same hour of high inspiration. Frequently we meet the phrase: "The Beauty of Holiness," forbidding us to think that our worship, because it is formless and unlovely, is therefore, or may yet be, pleasing to God. The gift of song, the spell of words wisely woven, and all the treasures of literature and art are, to those who know rightly to use them, a means of grace. It is certain that many with whom we have to deal, impervious to an argument, will yield only to an appeal directed to the eye or ear.

Once again, think of the seventy men called to share with Moses the burden of a growing people; the first

attempt at a Village Council or National Parliament, solemnly sanctioned and inaugurated by the Spirit of God. "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them." There are some who think that the Church endangers her spirituality when she takes to do with politics. But has she not good reason to doubt her spirituality if she does otherwise, if she does not train up and send out men and women to be leaders in every department of social and civic life? There are many in our churches of whom, if we judge by their conduct and conversation, we might conclude that they have never heard "whether there be any Holy Ghost." But if unspirituality is bad, not less so is the pseudo-spirituality, conventional in phrase and stereotyped in form, which narrows down the circle of the sacred and leaves nine-tenths of life as unconsecrated ground.

But now, confining ourselves to the distinctly religious, let us study the progressive method followed by the Holy Spirit.

We begin with an obscure passage in Gen. vi. 1-8. Here is an age of phenomenal activity. "There were giants in those days"; intellectual giants, the first of inventors and conquerors. It was an age of increasing corruption, of freedom abused and powers misdirected. It was an age, too, of impending judgment. Already the storm was gathering which was to sweep away a guilty race. "And God said: My Spirit shall not always be humbled in man,¹ because that, in going astray,² he is become flesh; and henceforth his days

¹ רָוַן. See Dillmann, *in loco*.

² בָּשָׂר

shall be a hundred and twenty years." Thus as the horizon narrowed, and the forces of evil became more pronounced; as man in his waywardness identified himself with the earthly side of his nature and so "became flesh," the Spirit of God, humbled, *i.e.* held down and scarcely recognized amid the profusion of His own gifts, carries on His work. To the same gracious ministry witness is borne in the Psalter. In Ps. li. you hear the cry of the human heart to God for a "free spirit," *i.e.* love instead of law; for a "steadfast spirit," *i.e.* principle instead of impulse, and for a "holy spirit," *i.e.* fellowship instead of forms, God's image renewed in man. Here the Spirit, no longer humbled, rules in men and leads them back to God.

Turn next to the prophetic Scriptures. In Zechariah, you read of the spirit of grace and supplication; in Joel, of the spirit of prophecy, poured out on all flesh; in Ezekiel, of the spirit of holiness quickening the dead, working outwards from man till "the fruit of the tree and the increase of the fields are multiplied." A great revival is here; social forces are captured in the interests of religion, and even nature rejoices in the sensible presence of God. Most of all you must study the work of the Spirit in revealing Christ, now in garments dyed with blood, now crowned with the blessings of peace, as Israel's King, as Jehovah's Servant, as Son of Man coming in the clouds. Thus, under the hands of the supreme artist, the picture grows, the outlines are filled in; till at last, with a certain inevitableness, the ideal passes into the actual and Christ appears, "on whom the Spirit largely shed, exerts its sacred fire."

Yet all this is only a background to the day of Pentecost.

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit may be briefly summed up thus :

(a) The Eternal Father sees Himself realized in the Eternal Son by a necessity which, otherwise merely natural, is transformed into a relation of mutual freedom by the Eternal Spirit, proceeding equally from the Father and the Son.

(b) God cannot see Himself reflected in a world where the gifts of His Spirit are fugitive and fragmentary, as under the Old Covenant ; but only where they are permanent and combined as in the God-man, that Holy One, begotten of the Spirit, in whom the work of creation culminates.

(c) Man can be redeemed only as he is restored to holiness by the Spirit in a union with Christ which, on our side as on His, must be personal and free, a fellowship of love. *To sum up : the aim of the Spirit in the new creation is to bring to birth a Church or Kingdom wherein God through Christ shall reign over the souls of men, and of which freedom, holiness, and love shall be the marks.*

“ Nothing is more unlikely,” says Martensen, “ no supposition more untenable, than the notion that the Church might have been introduced into the world merely by a series of human impulses and outward circumstances, of pious recollections and holy feelings ; or again, by a number of sporadic, vague, and instinctive movements and agitations of the Divine Spirit. Upon such a supposition, the Church would have been launched on the world to wander to and fro after a principle of development,

driven like a ship without helm or compass, now in one direction, now in another. At the best, by such haphazard and uncertain beginnings, a multiplicity of religious sects and gnostic schools would have been set up, but certainly not a Church, a living organization for revelation and redemption, spreading itself through all times and nations and flowing throughout history with a full tide of revealed truth and grace. The Christian Church could not have been ushered into the world except by a definite act, declaring her to be the new creation of Christ, to be developed through all time, growing up and increasing into Christ who is her Head, possessing the all-embracing principle of future development in the new regenerate consciousness with which she is endowed." Such a definite act, at once creative and regulative, we associate with the day of Pentecost.

Writing to the Corinthians, St. Paul says: "Ye are the temple of God."¹ Note the phrase, a subject which is plural followed by a predicate which is single. Christians are the living stones which together form the temple, the Church. In the third article of the Apostles' Creed we profess our faith in the Holy Ghost; and the fourth, fifth, and sixth are closely related to it. We believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins. And if to doubt your own forgiveness is to deny the witness of the Spirit and the Bride, to disown a Christian brother, however erring, is to aim at the very life of the Church which, as the Bride of Christ, is always one. In such a case, the Church lives on; it is we who suffer loss, perishing in our scornful pride and

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 16.

isolation. For no doubt schism is a deadly sin ; yet the only real schism is not doctrinal but practical, not divergence of creed but defection from love. We may profess the same faith and worship God with the same forms, and yet know nothing of the communion of saints or the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, unless that love which is the breath of the Spirit have made us one. Hence in the same Epistle, St. Paul writes : " Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or as a tinkling cymbal." ¹ Writing to a Church disgraced by a relapse into practical paganism, and distracted by the pursuit of false ideals and the cultivation of showy but insubstantial gifts, he holds up this beautiful ideal of Church life. He sings this Hymn of Love, convinced that, if he can only keep on singing, men will learn to sing with him ; and then all the misdirected energy and all the squandered wealth of head and heart will go to swell the triumph of Love. In the unity of the Spirit there is no place for party cries ; where Love reigns, with her sweetness and simplicity and perfect sanity, the irrational and extraordinary, the showy and insubstantial lose their charm.

In this way we see that no bounds can be set to the possible expansion of the Church. Every other society, the family or the State, is limited by the physical and moral conditions under which it exists. It is our boast, as Britons, that the sun never sets over our world-wide empire. For that we have to thank the large measure of individual liberty we enjoy, and a generous recognition of racial differences. On the other hand, we recognize

¹ 1 Cor. xiii. 1.

that such expansion imposes a strain which, if indefinitely increased, may reach the breaking-point. How far it is possible for men of an Eastern race to achieve for themselves intellectual and moral maturity yet still continue within the empire, co-operating with Western races whose tastes and ideals differ widely from their own, is a problem the solution of which lies with the future. No such problem confronts the Church. As it is true of Christ, the Son of Man, that all men see themselves realized in Him, so is it true of His Church that all men find their home in her and room for legitimate self-development. Eastern Christianity will always differ from that of the West. We welcome what it has to teach of Christ, not known to us before. The only thing that could hinder the expansion of the Church would be that which, at the same time, must ensure her extinction, the sin against the Holy Ghost, want of love.

This also let us lay to heart that, for the Church, the springs of power and progress from which she draws lie within. Of course no Church can afford to neglect the organization of her forces. Even on the vexed question of State Aid there is room for difference of opinion. But however the Church may enter into an alliance with the State, and at times invoke the civil power to protect and enforce her discipline and faith, it is never in that direction that she will find the springs from which she draws. She was never so rich as when her leaders confessed: Silver and gold have we none; never so strong as when in conscious weakness she betook herself to prayer. Her progress was never so marked as when she was still a despised and persecuted sect.

Spiritual forces have carried her beyond the sea and naturalized her in every clime ; and to these spiritual forces, the word of God and the prayers of her people, we must still commit her.

You will find much profit as well as pleasure in a study of the Book of Acts. Not once only, as in chapter ii., did the Spirit descend upon the Church. Within a few pages, chapter iv. 31, we read of a second Pentecost, marked by the same signs and wonders, no longer needed to accredit her to the kingdoms of earth, yet welcomed as confirming her in the discharge of her mission. Indeed, the history of the Church has been a succession of Pentecosts. Of St. Columba, that famous Gospeller, his biographer tells us : " So incessantly was he engaged day and night in fasting and vigils, that the burden of either of these exercises might have seemed beyond human endurance. Yet still, in all he was beloved by all, for a holy joy ever beaming in his face revealed the joy with which the Spirit filled his inmost heart." The Reformers appealed with the same joyous confidence from the traditions of the Church and the subtleties of the schoolmen to the *Testimonium Spiritus Sancti*, granted to the humblest follower of Christ. And the baptism of the Spirit was the watchword of the Wesleyan movement which gave a new lease of life to Christianity in England.

You will further see how the routine of Church life was sweetened and sanctified by the presence of the Spirit. There was a time when, in lecturing through the Book of Acts, I made it a practice to pass over chapter xv. It read too much like a minute of Presbytery or Synod ;

the atmosphere was ecclesiastical rather than spiritual. I think differently to-day. There is no chapter in which I see more of the pleasant fruits of the Spirit. Note the good humour, the self-restraint, the conciliatory spirit with which the leaders of the Church discuss what was a burning question for them ; nor less, the wisdom of the conclusion, the compromise, they reach. Study specially the fine summing up of their momentous deliberations : It seemed good unto the Holy Ghost and to us. In clearing the air of misunderstanding, in conciliating opposing forces, in preparing the way for further advance, they were as conscious of the presence and power of the Spirit as on the day of Pentecost. By and by, gentlemen, it will be part of your duty to attend meetings of Presbytery and Assembly. Never excuse yourselves on the plea that the business of Church Courts is a menace to your spirituality. A menace to your pride and self-conceit it may well be ; no man likes to be out-voted or out-argued. But if you go to learn meekness, patience, courtesy, and self-effacement, if you go in the spirit of prayer, seeking not to impose your views on others but to learn through others what is God's will for all, such meetings may be a means of grace as truly as a Communion season.

Better still, you will see the influence of the Spirit on the character and ministry of those apostolic men. Think what they were before Pentecost, captious and querulous, timid, hesitant, unstable ; and afterwards, prompt, fearless, effective both in word and deed. They were ignorant and unlettered men, without educational advantages such as you enjoy ; yet they were

mighty in the Scriptures. Shades of Calvin, Turretin, and Hodge, how often have we invoked your aid in opening up some obscure passage or handling some thorny point of doctrine, forgetful of the promise given to us as well as to them : " When the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth." How urgent, persuasive, irresistible, were their appeals. Brainerd, himself no unskilful preacher of the word, tells us : " When ministers feel the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit in their hearts, it wonderfully assists them to come at the consciences of men and, as it were, to handle them ; whereas without these, whatever reason or oratory we may employ, we do but make use of stumps instead of hands." So it was with the apostles. " There were added daily to the Church of such as should be saved." Thus the nets were filled, yet were they not broken. For most of all wonderful was the spirit of unity that prevailed. If in a neighbouring parish a brother-minister has his church crowded and numbers his converts by hundreds, I find it difficult not to envy him. Yet, if we are working for the same cause and in the same spirit, his success is mine.

" Be filled with the Spirit." Richer than all His gifts, source of all the grace you need, let Him dwell in you. Honour Him in the variety of His methods and the catholic completeness with which He seeks to sanctify the whole of life. Yet remember that He comes, first of all, to convince of sin, to convert to Christ, and to reveal to men the secret love of God. There is no separate cult, no Gospel, of the Holy Ghost. You honour Him most in honouring Christ. Preach

not about Him, but in the power He gives. Do not fail to recognize the ethical conditions under which alone He can work. As He is the author of law and order in nature, it is unwise to ignore these in the operation of His grace. You cannot resist Him on the lower level, and command Him on the higher; you cannot be unfaithful in the discharge of duty and yet enjoy the comfort of His presence within your heart. A leakage far back in the past, idle hours, lightness in conversation, infirmities of temper or will, may cut you off from your supplies of grace, and leave you like Samson when he awoke out of sleep and knew not that the Lord was departed from him. On the other hand, you cannot live simply, work diligently, or pray earnestly, following Christ, and miss the gracious influence of His Spirit. He may not come in the earthquake, whirlwind or fire, but in the still small voice. You may have no extraordinary experiences, no experience which would interest anybody but yourself. What then? The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering. It is these that feed the soul and nourish her strength. These are the seals of the Spirit which you must covet most in your ministry.

When in Rome, I visited the slave-market where some Saxon youths, *non Angli sed Angeli*, were put up to the hammer, and where the good old abbot, afterwards Pope Gregory VII., pitying their friendless state, bought them back, and not only sent them home to England, but sent the Gospel with them, the dawn of a new day for these dark isles. I visited the church which bears his name on the Coelian Hill. I saw the

garden where he played as a child, the narrow cell where he studied his Bible and prayed, the guest-chamber where on one occasion he seated twelve poor men at his table and, as the story goes, a thirteenth sat with them whose form was as that of the Son of God. I saw himself, the good, kind old man, represented, both on canvas and in marble, with a dove perched on his shoulder, according to the legend that whatever he did, whether he prayed or fed the poor or planned for the evangelization of distant regions, he was directly and consciously inspired by the Spirit of God. Put aside the poetic form in which the story has clothed itself, and say why should not such a life be yours. Cherish the dove in your bosom, honour the Spirit of God as an instinct even in fallen humanity ; He will become articulative and regulative in that nature redeemed by grace. In this way you may hope to realize the true ideal of the Christian minister : " The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor."

Nothing is so essential as spiritual power, and in nothing, alas ! are we so lacking. A man may be a good scholar and a great worker and yet wholly fail in his ministry, because deficient here. How then may we receive this gift of power ? First, by faith. We receive the Spirit just as we receive Christ, trusting God to do as He has said and give what He has offered. Next, by the study of Scripture. We read of " the Spirit of promise." He is so called because He applies to us the word of God ; He comes, if I may use the fine figure quoted by Goodwin from the *Book of Martyrs*,

“riding upon the wings of a promise.” So it was with our Lord in baptism. Musing on an Old Testament promise,¹ and applying it to Himself, He received the assurance of His Sonship and the gift of the Spirit, as we too may do. Lastly, by prayer. Set your heart on this one thing. Keep your heart open, and the Spirit will come. For He “bloweth where He listeth”; and yet there is a law in His listing, for He comes where He finds an empty heart waiting to welcome Him. And “there is no reason why we should despair of any bit of work, however hard, if we believe in the living Holy Spirit.”²

¹ Matt. iii. 17; probably a reference to Isa. xlii. 1. See also Matt. xii. 17-20.

² *The Life of Rev. G. H. C. Macgregor.*

CHAPTER XV

THE ETHICS OF THE MINISTRY

BISHOP BUTLER has taught us that the duties of life are based on its relations ; so that, with every new relation, a new and corresponding duty emerges. Thus, if a tradesman supplies me with a pair of shoes or a suit of clothing, I owe him an equivalent in money for the time and the material spent on me. Similarly, confidence is due to the friend who shares my labours, and a becoming reverence to the parents who nourish my youth. What, then, is due to Him, to whom I owe all ? What less, what else, than the love and devotion of a life ? “ *Nur die Liebe ist der Liebe Preis.* ” As man is naturally religious, never without some dim consciousness of Powers above, it follows that morality, if thought out, issues in the practice of religion, the worship and obedience which we owe to God.

So far as Christianity is based on the truths of natural religion, natural virtues are enforced by it, though often in new combinations and always with higher sanction. Truth, honour, loyalty find their place in Christian ethics. To be a Christian is, as we have seen, to be in the fullest sense a man. On the other hand, so far as Christianity is a revelation, it implies new relations and imposes new duties ; the Christian ideal of manhood, the Christian

character, is distinctively its own. Thus, the reverence which all men cherish toward the Supreme Being deepens into the humility we cherish toward One who is not only infinitely great but absolutely good, and who condescends to call us His friends. Christian love is no longer merely a natural affection but a principle, operative not only toward kinsfolk and friends but toward all, inculcating that forgiveness toward others which we ourselves need and have received. And so with hope. The Gospel reveals an eternal future ; and, in so doing, it alters the whole perspective and proportion of life. Within the seventy years allotted to us on earth, little can be achieved ; hence the feeling of impotence which creeps over us at times. But Christianity bids us look ahead. " What we learn on earth we shall practise in heaven " ; what lies beyond our reach as mortals is assured to us as sons of God. We are therefore, or ought to be, invincible optimists. It is only as we ground men thus in the Christian faith, that we can beget in them the Christian character and imbue them with the principles of Christian conduct.

Christian ethics are embodied for us in Jesus Christ. " I have left you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." Three points here deserve attention.

(a) It is often urged against Christianity, that it has hopelessly failed. After eighteen centuries men are not much happier or better than they were when Christ came. It may be so ; but against that fact we place this other, that, spite of failure, and amid the ebb and flow of a fitful tide of effort and aspiration, the goal remains. Christian civilization has its vices, as pagan

civilization had ; at least they are branded as vices and driven into the shade. Christ has done this for us ; He has fixed once for all the standard of Christian conduct. He is the ideal after which we are striving still.

(b) But an ideal is not a rule which may be followed blindly and mechanically ; nor is Christ. In earnest souls there is a disposition to ask : How would Jesus have acted under given conditions ? and it is assumed that loyalty to Him implies imitation of Him. But that is impossible. The conditions under which the ideal was realized in history forbid it. Jesus never was a father, or an employer of labour, or the head of a state, nor can we say how, under such conditions, He would have acted. He belonged, moreover, to a particular age and community to which the complex problems that vex us were unknown. Finally, He had a mission, and loyally accepted the limits it imposed. In His teaching He gives no precepts but confines Himself to principles. In reverencing Him as the Christian ideal, we forgo the manifest convenience of an appeal to Him as the rule of life.

(c) But then, and this is most of all important, the Christian ideal as thus identified with Him becomes a living force. St. Paul says : " Let the mind that was in Christ be in you " ; ¹ and again : " If the Spirit that dwelt in Christ be in you, He that raised up Jesus from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies." ² In these words this at least, if not this only, is implied, that, if the Spirit of Christ dwell in us, the mere framework, the conduct, of life will fashion itself according to an

¹ Phil. ii. 5.

² Rom. viii. 11.

inward principle. Love, joy, and peace are fruits, not works ; that is to say, they are not the laborious product of our own activity, but the expression of a new life. Originality and spontaneity are the marks of the Christian character ; it is the creation of the Spirit. The pupil of a great master does not attempt to reproduce his work. He studies the master's methods, learns his secret, imbibes his spirit, and then applies them on lines often markedly his own. In Christian ethics we condemn the conventional and stereotyped. It has been urged of certain actions that, because neither Christ nor His apostles did them, they are wrong. And yet they may be right for us ; and, even if they are not binding on us, it may yet be right to do them as a protest against the idea that they are wrong. The joyous freedom of the Christian character must never be lost. I have the greatest respect for church-going and the time-honoured practices of the Christian life ; I know their value ; I fear the result of their neglect. Yet I will not, because I dare not, make them of the essence of the Christian life. Nothing makes a Christian, nothing goes to form a truly Christian character, but a free and loving surrender to the Spirit of Christ. Jesus was often misunderstood. St. Paul offended the Christianity of his day by a noble disregard of usage, in the interests of edification ; we may have to do the same.

Christian ethics may best be studied in the origin and formation of the Christian character. We begin with the individual. Jesus is said to have discovered him ; and in a sense that is true. He saw the image of God in every man, and knew the infinite value of a soul.

How often does He speak of "one"—"one such," "one of these little ones," "one sinner that repenteth." And along this line we are safe to follow Him. There are men who hanker after the crowd. They lose all heart and interest in their work if the congregation is small. But in so doing they display their ignorance not only of theology but of philosophy and history. To hold a single seed in your hand is to control successive harvests ; to impress a single mind is to liberate forces which may sweep over a continent and work on for centuries. When Athens turned a deaf ear to Socrates, he talked to Plato ; and what he said to Plato the world is hearing to-day. Staupitz did not waste the hours he spent by Luther's bedside ; for Luther was destined to stand before princes. "If he should turn out ill," said Dr. Arnold of a young boy lately come to Rugby, "I think I should break my heart." The lesson is to be laid to heart by preachers as well as teachers ; the value of a single soul.

But the individual finds himself as one of a family, nation, or race. The rights of the individual are based on the idea of moral personality, "the capacity of the individual to conceive a good that shall be the same for others as for himself, to determine his action by the conception of such a perfection of his own being as involves the perfection of the society in which he lives."¹ How, then, are we to correlate the duty of self-development to the idea of a communal life ? Notice that we are dealing here with the law of human progress. Life in a crowded city is richer and fuller than in a country parish ; but personal freedom is seriously curtailed by

¹ *Principles of Political Obligation*, by T. H. Green.

bye-laws and municipal regulations in the one case, which are unknown in the other. While the social contract embraces only a few, the constraint is scarcely felt ; when it embraces thousands, it is otherwise. What men demand to-day is the right not only to live but to labour and to enjoy the fruit of their labour. And as all work tends to specialize, it involves a passage through the "Portal of Renunciation."¹ To scorn delights and live laborious days is still the secret of success. No movement for the uplift of the race was ever carried through without mutual forbearance. To work for others we must work with them, and often stoop to conquer. Now the highest interpretation of this law is found in the religion of Christ. He did more than discover the individual, He pointed the way to his perfecting. He did this by His own example : "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone ; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." He did it not less by precept, holding up before us a goal which is not atomic but social, a kingdom where the only law is that of love which finds its own blessedness in that of others. The individualistic conception of salvation proves unsatisfying because it is one-sided ; only "with all saints," *i.e.* by service and sacrifice, can we enter into the fulness of Him who filleth all in all.² And without doubt, in this reconciliation of opposite interests, in this emphasis laid on love as the great social solvent, is the highest achievement of Christian ethics. How the ideal may be wrought out in the home, the city, and

¹ *The Dedicated Life*, by Lord Haldane.

² Eph. iii. 18 and i. 23.

the state, experience will best teach us ; only let us be certain there can be no conflict here. " He that will lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's, shall keep it unto life everlasting." Just as in the home we learn the fundamental virtues, truth, patience, and self-restraint, which fit us for service in the state ; so, in the state we learn those civic virtues, that wider outlook and self-effacement, which find their highest expression in the Kingdom of God. And the reaction will never fail to follow. No nation has a chance, or any right, to survive, save in so far as it identifies itself with the Christian ideal.

From those far issues, let me recall you to what is for us of primary importance, the conduct of our ministerial life. Let me speak of loyalty to truth, and diligence in the discharge of duty.

1. *Loyalty to Truth.*—I use the word in its widest sense, not merely of verbal accuracy, but of a certain temper, a character and conduct consonant with our calling as servants of Jesus Christ. You must be true. To speak or act untruly is an offence against your own conscience, your better self. It introduces an element of fatal discord into life. A house cannot stand, if the foundations are seamed and cracked. However clever, strenuous, and aspiring you may be, nothing permanently good or great will come of your life if there is no soul of honour in it, if it is distracted by side-issues and selfish aims. The rapid and gratifying success which attends the career of many an unscrupulous man, be he politician or ecclesiastic, proves in the end to be a discreditable

failure. Be true, not merely when it seems to matter, *i.e.* when others are involved, but always and everywhere and for your own sake. The general principle is readily granted ; difficulties begin with its application.

(a) Is it ever lawful to deviate from truth, or, putting it bluntly, to tell a lie ? You will find an interesting discussion of the question in Martensen's *Ethics*. He points out that the highest authorities differ here. Basil the Great rejects the so-called lie of exigency ; while Chrysostom defends it. Augustine condemns it ; while Jerome finds it permissible. Calvin will have none of it ; while Luther finds it scarcely good. So among philosophers ; Kant and Fichte disown it, while Jacobi champions it : " I will lie like Desdemona, I will lie and deceive like Pylades who took the place of Orestes." The good Bishop himself is scarcely surefooted here.¹ He protests against the rigour that would have the communication of truth carried through regardless of circumstances, while it overlooks the difference between formal truth, or accuracy, and essential truth which he identifies with love. He maintains that the communication of truth should be regulated by a wisdom which takes into account the possible consequences of an act, even though these are sometimes beyond our ken and never under our control. He concludes that the lie of exigency may, in certain circumstances, be inevitable. Yet he admits that there is always in it something that calls for excuse and forgiveness, and urges that we should seek to outgrow the moral weakness which requires it. " As we advance in faith, in courage, in willingness to suffer and make sacri-

¹ *Christian Ethics* (Individual), §§ 97, 98.

fices for others, in a word in right wisdom, the need for it will disappear." But it may well seem doubtful whether that can be regarded as inevitable which requires either forgiveness or excuse. Certainly in those who, as teachers of truth, are supposed to have outgrown the stage of ethical immaturity, it can never be defensible.

The strongest argument against any deviation from truth is that it tends indefinitely to widen out. Thus, if it were ever permissible to lie, it might be in the interests of Truth itself and in the service of the Church. But that is the morality of the Jesuit, which has done more than anything else to bring discredit on religion among truth-loving men. And if it were permissible to lie in the interests of the Church, might we not lie in our own defence, who are servants of the Church? Might we not deny that we have spoken the hasty word which has been misunderstood by those whom we are anxious not to hinder but to help? And again, the effective discharge of our ministry depends largely on the comfort with which we carry on our work; might we not, then, rid ourselves by a lie of some fretful and disturbing influence, so as to restore the needful equanimity to our spirits? But by this time, if we have not lost sight of Truth altogether, her face is dimmed beyond recognition, and her voice dulled by distance. I imagine that St. Peter when he denied his Lord may have argued so. A servant girl had no right to accost him, no title to catechize him as to his antecedents. She must be silenced at any cost, lest he lose caste in the palace and the chance of standing by his Master to the end. Yet no sooner did his roving eye rest on the face of Jesus, than the naked majesty of

truth blazed out on him and sent him forth to weep over a shameful lie. In others a lie may sometimes be venial, but never in the ministers of Truth.

(b) A further question is raised by what is called the Economy of Truth ; how far is it permissible to conceal or to disguise a truth revealed ? Missionaries on the foreign field are confronted by this question every day ; even we cannot escape it. You spend years here in the study of Biblical Criticism and cognate subjects. And if the study is strenuous, if you think to any purpose, you find yourselves not drifting but driven to conclusions far away from the presuppositions of your youth. Then you settle down in a country parish among simple people who have neither time nor taste for such studies, people who cling to old-world ideas about the Bible and have a superstitious dread of Higher Criticism. How are you to deal with them ? A young minister, proud of his learning and not unwilling to display it, may make a grievous blunder here. He intimates a course of sermons on Old Testament subjects, in which Moses and the Pentateuch are summarily divorced, David is shorn of his laurels as the sweet singer of Israel, and the Book of Daniel treated as a religious romance with no foundation in history. The people are first surprised, then scandalized ; in a year's time they have left him, or he has left them—for good, in more ways than one. Yet he asks in all sincerity : What was I to do ? Could I pretend to believe as they did ? Let me entreat you to have a care. Much mischief may be done by ill-considered words. The people you offend are those who, if wisely handled, might have been your best supporters, leaders

in all aggressive Christian work. What, then, does loyalty to truth mean here ?

Remember that you are sent out, first and foremost, as shepherds of men's souls. Study to approve yourselves as such. Establish yourselves in the confidence of your people, as those who have no end or aim but to lead them and their children into a humbler, closer walk with God. You cannot do that in a week ; but patience will prevail. And when you have won the confidence of your people, when they say of you : We do not understand his views but we are sure that he is a good man, you will have a point of vantage from which you may work safely and with good results. My own experience is, that men welcome light on curious and critical questions from one whom they have learned to trust. Let me remind you of the Master's words to His disciples : " I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now " ; practise a like reserve. Nothing is gained by blinding men with too much light. Remember, too, that you are to be preachers of the Gospel, not professors of Biblical Criticism. And though there is no department of knowledge on which you may not draw, the burden of your preaching must be positive evangelical truth. Your main concern lies not with the date and authorship of a book, but with its message, with the faith, hope, and love which breathe through it and which you desire to see enkindled in the lives of those around. There is a proportion in truth as in beauty, which you must never violate. If you obtrude the accidental so as to obscure the essential, the impression you produce on the minds of your hearers must be

false, even though you say nothing that is not true. And surely it is possible to lecture through the Book of Jonah, bringing out its moral and spiritual teaching in such a way that reasonable men will come, by a kind of instinct, to feel that it matters very little to them whether the prophet was literally swallowed by a whale or only lost in the slums of a great city whose name may have suggested the figure used.

And still further, remember that when you deal with critical questions, it is your business to show that criticism is not destructive but constructive in its aims ; that when the critical results are accepted, the Bible loses nothing of its unity or authority, but becomes, vividly and vitally as never before, the revelation of an eternal purpose to the conscience and the heart. All this, of course, requires much of that wisdom for which Bishop Martensen pleads. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God." ¹ "Speak the truth in love"; ² that is, with due regard to the needs of your hearers and the aims of the Gospel you are sent to preach.

(c) But we are not yet at an end with our difficulties. Mentally and morally we ourselves must grow. We never are what we should be, or shall be ; always there is an interval between theory and practice in the Christian life. What, then, shall be the norm of our preaching ? Shall I hold up to others graces I do not myself possess ; point them to heights I have not myself attained ; summon them to victory on fields where I myself have met defeat ? Is it permissible to fling myself into the experience of others, the penitence of Peter, the rapture

¹ Jas. i. 5.

² Eph. iv. 15.

of Paul, depicting these with the little personal touches which tend to realism, certain that when the sermon is over I shall be haunted by a guilty feeling that I have been playing a part, making my hearers mistake me for the man I am not? Or shall I rigidly confine myself to the narrow round, the low levels, the decencies and civilities of the Christian life, where I am at home, with the assurance that those of my people whom I am most anxious to help will miss from my preaching just what they seek, the impulse and uplift of a high ideal? I ask again: What does loyalty to truth mean here? It is the question which beyond all others you must face; and happily the answer need not fail you.

When you are dealing with a living organism, the truth about it never lies within the narrow region of actual fact. Take a spray of apple-blossom. Here is form and colour and delicate fragrance—all indisputable facts, appealing to the senses. Yet these are only a curious device of nature to secure the fertilization of the plant. The inner truth is the life, of which form, colour, and fragrance are only passing phases; the life which is always outgrowing itself, giving you, instead of a spray of fragrant blossom, the ripe and ruddy fruit. Now, so it is with the Gospel. The truth is neither an actual experience nor an absolute ideal; it is the transition from the one to the other; it is the Christian life which proves itself by growth and progress, and conflict and conquest, and which somehow must find expression in every sermon you preach. Be as ethical as you please. Preach the duties of the Christian life, but so as to suggest that grace without which no duty can be

discharged ; a grace which is not only infinite in its reach but indivisible in its essence, so that, to have it at all, you must have it for all in all, in the first act of faith the pledge of the perfect Christian life. Or, if you will, preach the Christian ideal, the full assurance of faith, the hope that makes not ashamed, the love that casts out fear ; but, while you preach it, strive after it patiently, passionately, prayerfully, as one who strives for his life. In this way your preaching will never want the note of sincerity which carries conviction ; while the sense of distance, the far horizons, the visionary element which lends all its charm to preaching, will be there too, reacting on the imperfect present of life, your own and that of others. Paul is not less true to the Christian ideal when he cries : Oh wretched man that I am ! than when he adds : I thank God, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Nor is it the verbal conjunction of the two phrases that saves his sincerity. For indeed the one is present in the other. It is the vision of Christ that wakens in him that self-despair the record of which moves us still so deeply as we read it. Preach like him. Such is this strange sad life of ours, so blurred, so broken, that he only can be loyal to the truth who is determined at every step to deny and disown himself. It will be your salvation as preachers, that you preach first and foremost to yourselves. As you climb the pulpit stairs, take your place among the simple folk who crowd the pews. Bow your head as they bow theirs, and pray that you too may be taught. Confront your own failures with that faith which is the victory over all. No sermon is wholly

lost if, whoever else remains cold and unmoved, the preacher profits, leaving the pulpit a humbler and a better man.

2. And now of *Diligence in the discharge of duty*. Let me warn you against another besetting sin of our calling, Idleness. And here, to save my face, as a Chinaman would say, I will speak in parables. Our Lord introduces us to three of His servants, with one or other of whom each of us may identify himself.

The first is the servant to whom his master entrusted five talents. He is the Brilliant Man; all things are in his favour, health and wealth, high birth and a liberal education, and, crowning all, the golden opportunity. In such a case success seems inevitable. He begins with five talents; he ends with ten, doubling his capital. Universal plaudits surround him: Well done, well done! You are perhaps surprised to learn that this man, who does everything apparently with such consummate ease, is a "demon-worker." "He went and traded with the same," losing no time, determined to be first in the market. And that was the secret of his success. Even five talents will not grow to ten, unless promptly and wisely invested. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of honest hard work in the career even of a brilliant man. Lord Morley says of Gladstone, his great hero, that his foot was never out of the stirrup; a man of superb genius, he was a giant at work. It may be that there is some brilliant man here; let him remember that great gifts impose great responsibility. He has his five talents; we shall all cry: Bravo! Well done! when he returns having doubled them.

The second is the Faithful Soul. He has only two talents in hand ; but he too trades with them and, on his Lord's return, lays four talents at his feet, half apologetically, recognizing the immense superiority of the man who begins with five. Is he surprised to be met with the same words of generous appreciation : " Well done, good and faithful servant " ? Yet why not ? He too has doubled his capital. Tried by the only true test, the quality rather than the quantity of the work done, they are on the same level. And the question for all of us will be, not how much we have done, but whether we have done our best. Moses was a poet and a philosopher, lawgiver and empire-builder, yet when Heaven comes down to pass judgment on his eventful career, instead of choice phrases culled to weave a dainty chaplet for his brows, a simple entry sums it up : " My servant Moses is faithful in all My house." Of Christ Himself, no more is said : Faithful as a son. And you and I, however meagre our gifts and narrow our spheres, may stand shoulder to shoulder with earth's noblest and heaven's best, if only we are faithful. I find that Phillips Brooks, in one of his sermons, describes this second servant as " The Average Man." Average in point of gifts he was ; but in spirit ? I do not care to dispute the authority of the great preacher, but I am inclined to say : Happy the church whose average man is directed and supported in his humble tasks by a lofty ideal, and whom we may thus identify with the Faithful Soul.

The third is the Idle Fellow. He has only one talent, no great abilities, no splendid opportunities ; and what can a man do with one talent ? He said : I know what

I will do. I will dig a hole in the ground and bury it there, for I am ashamed of it. And then, on my Lord's return, I will fling it in his face, and say : There, that is thine, and we are quits. But we cannot so easily shuffle off our responsibilities. His Lord said to him : "Thou wicked and slothful servant !" To come into a world where every creature has its appointed task, to eat the fat and drink the sweet, to boast ourselves of Reason, and all the time to do nothing, is an outrage on nature. Such a tenant very soon has notice to quit. To be idle is to waste God's good gifts, of which the best is opportunity. Even one talent, well used, might grow to two, and two to ten ; such profit is there in all honest toil under the sun. Most of us are foredoomed to lives of comparative obscurity ; yet in a quiet parish there is room for the most shining virtues and for signal success. Failure never lies in circumstances, but always in ourselves.

There cannot be many brilliant men in a gathering like this ; there need be no idlers. We cannot all be brilliant ; we may all be faithful.

"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistening foil
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies ;
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove.
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed."

We are told of Rabbi Duncan, a great scholar and a humble Christian, that he once said : " If ever I felt inclined to contradict my Master, it would be if I heard Him say of me, Well done, good and faithful servant."

Singularly enough, as he breathed his last and lay back in the grand repose of death, an attendant, as if moved by a sudden inspiration, uttered over him those very words. And the meek lips made no protest as God's grace crowned his life of faithful toil. May such a reward be ours !

Gentlemen, let me, in closing, make my own the moving appeal with which St. Gregory bid farewell to the readers of his *Regula Pastorum* :

Ecce, bone vir, reprehensionis meæ necessitate compulsus, dum monstrare qualis esse debeat pastor invigilo, pulchrum depinxi hominem pictor fœdus, aliosque ad perfectionis littus dirigo qui adhuc in delictorum fluctibus versor. Sed in hujus quæso naufragio, orationis tuæ me tabula sustine ut, quia pondus proprium deprimit, tui meriti manus levet.

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